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# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MURDER



# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MURDER

A STUDY IN CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

ANDREAS BJERRE

DOCTOR OF LAWS

TRANSLATED FROM THE SWEDISH BY

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## PREFACE

ANDREAS BJERRE'S work, "The Psychology of Murder," is an extremely fascinating book, which not only the expert but also whoever is interested in psychological or social questions may read with great profit. The subject has attracted many writers before Bjerre—philosophers, doctors, lawyers and essayists. But Bjerre has approached the problem from an entirely new point of view. He has not contented himself with wide generalizations, or with the treatment of such second-hand material as criminal statistics, reports of trials, hospital and prison journals or other superficial data, however obtained. He has devoted many years of his life to first-hand study in Swedish prisons in order by constant personal association with criminals to solve the riddles hidden away in the dark places of their psychic lives. The first fruit of these studies was published in 1907 in a treatise on the psychology of theft. But whereas that work presented more general observations on certain criminal types, in "The Psychology of Murder" the author has selected three entirely disparate individuals, and has penetrated into depths and shadows of their lives unknown even to themselves. In the introduction to his work the author has given an interesting account of his methods, which must be of great assistance to subsequent enquirers. This study, conducted with great thoroughness and profound psychological intuition, opens up new possibilities of research in a field which is of the utmost importance to our social life.

But the author is not only a pre-eminent criminal psychologist ; his work is stamped with considerable literary talent. He draws his criminal types with artistic breadth and the



reader follows his analysis of the course of action with something of the tenseness which he experiences in the study of a drama by a master hand. In his own country he has been compared with Dostojevski, and it has been said by experts that in the gift of penetration into the psychic life of criminals he far surpasses that master.

Andreas Bjerre was born on March 21st, 1879, in Gothenburg. After having passed the examination for the degree of B.A. at Upsala in 1900, he continued his studies in Paris and Lund, where he took the degree of Bachelor of Laws. He then prosecuted his studies at Berlin, Oslo, Copenhagen and Stockholm, and began his psycho-criminological observations in Sweden's largest central prison at Långholmen in Stockholm. In 1909 he took the degree of Master of Laws, and submitted a treatise on "The Conception of Wrongfulness in Cases of Defamation" for his doctorate in law. After having continued his studies in the prison, he was in 1919 appointed Professor of Criminal Law at the University of Dorpat, and in 1921 to the chair of legal philosophy. He was compelled by bad health, however, to resign his chair at the end of the spring term in 1925, and on November 22nd of the same year he died at Tyninge in Sweden.

The expenses of the present translation have been defrayed by Harry A:son Johnson, Counsellor of Legation in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and by a fund which he created in 1919 with the object, among other things, of spreading a knowledge of Swedish legal science and legislation in foreign countries. The first duty undertaken by the administrators of this fund was to provide a translation into a world-language of Tore Almén's commentary, famous throughout the North, on the new Scandinavian legislation affecting purchase and sale of personal property, which translation has had a large circulation in England and America. That this work should have been selected is due not only to its great scientific value, but also to practical reasons: in international affairs the law of sale is of pre-eminent importance. Such practical reasons cannot be

adduced in the present case. But as the author was cut off in his best years it has seemed desirable to stimulate interest in his methods in the widest possible circles, since important results may be expected from their adoption, and they must therefore not be allowed to sink into oblivion.

BIRGER EKEBERG

*Stockholm,* (Formerly Minister of Justice).  
*22nd January, 1927.*



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## INTRODUCTION

THE present studies in criminal psychology, which constitute the first of a series of contributions to the psychology of murder, are based, like my already published studies in criminal psychology, on investigations conducted in the Central Prison at Långholmen, Stockholm, where, thanks to the extraordinary courtesy of the Director-General and Head of the Royal Board of Prisons, Mr. Viktor Almquist, I was afforded opportunity for exhaustive conversation with a large number of all sorts of criminals, and where I devoted myself more especially to the study of the psychology of murderers.

I may be permitted, by way of introduction to these essays on the psychology of various criminal types, to give a very brief account of the objects I have had in view, of the methods I have followed, and also of my position with reference to certain relevant problems which inevitably force themselves upon the attention in investigations of this kind, but which cannot be suitably treated in the accounts of the psychic development of the various criminals.

During my theoretical studies of criminal psychology—and especially during the time when I worked in Professor von Liszt's criminal institute at the University of Berlin—I had already come to the definite conclusion that modern criminal psychology had reached a stage in its development at which it was necessary to advance from general and indirect, essentially statistical, investigations to personal observation of the criminal. Criminal psychology is, as is well known, a young science, scarcely more than half a century old. It is natural and proper, therefore, that the

founders and creators of this young science should, like the pioneers in every other science, have first of all sought to gain a perspective over the new field of enquiry which they had opened up, which, though it might furnish a general orientation, must nevertheless be relatively superficial and uncertain. They left to their successors the task of penetrating by means of more exact research more deeply into the realities of their science, and of constructing for it a more stable foundation. It seems to me equally evident that the science of criminal psychology must now advance to detailed investigation unless it is to become stereotyped and fade away in a number of predetermined theses and generalizations concerning the nature of criminals, which, in the nature of things, must be more or less superficial and uncertain. Such detailed investigation is, however, so far as I can discover, only possible by personal observation, i.e., by visits to prisons and by personal contact with the criminals themselves. My view of the immediate problems of criminal psychology in our day has been strengthened and confirmed to an unusual degree by my practical work among criminals. My object in these studies has therefore been to investigate as fully as possible everything I have observed and everything which has occurred in the psychic life of the criminal. This introduction is not the proper place in which to seek to establish the correctness of my conception of the essential functions of the science of criminal psychology in its present stage of development. I hope instead in the near future to be able to prepare for publication a series of lectures on the history of criminal psychology, which I delivered some years ago. At present I desire merely to present the first causes of the object I had in view in these studies.

On the other hand the science of criminal psychology cannot possibly content itself with the investigation and description of the psychic life of isolated criminals ; it must in any case constantly seek to classify and systematize the material collected, and in each category of criminals selected

for special study there must be an endeavour to assign, at least provisionally, individual criminals to certain groups, according to their natural affinities, or, in other words, according to essential common characteristics. Such a classification of criminals presents, however, very marked and varied difficulties among different categories of criminals. In cases of theft and, as I believe, cases of offences against public decency and morals it is possible to distinguish directly between types or groups which are psychologically quite clearly defined, and which together comprise practically all the criminals in the field in question. Among murderers on the other hand every single crime appeared from the beginning to have developed from such completely distinct and peculiar psychological conditions that it would be quite impossible to classify such criminals in groups on the basis of any essential common characteristics. Indeed, the studies which are the foundation of this book have long ago convinced me that in this field criminal psychology must for the present restrict itself to isolated individual investigations, i.e., to psychological monographs on individual criminals, of course with due and constant observation of any common characteristics among them which might in the future, when more comprehensive material has been collected, render possible a more systematic psychological classification. In order to avoid any misconception, I must point out from the beginning that the classification of murderers into groups at which I have finally arrived is both hypothetical in its foundation and incomplete in practice. It is possible, though I think very improbable, that further and more profound study will show that the psychological criteria which I have taken are too superficial, and that even if my classification proves to be of permanent value, it is beyond all doubt that it will have to be amplified by new groups.

The foundation of this classification is a generalization of the essential common elements in the psychic life of all the criminals under observation. From the beginning,



and for many reasons, I adopted towards it a position not merely very sceptical, but positively hostile. In spite of all my critical resistance, however, it grew up organically out of my accumulated experience among these criminals, until finally I could no longer doubt its correctness: briefly stated, the generalization is that the determining factor in all crime is *weakness*. Of course, I do not mean by this the obvious fact that murderers, like all other criminals—with infinitesimally few and insignificant exceptions—are abnormal from the point of view of social ethics, a fact which it requires no reflections of criminal psychology to establish, since it follows from the conception of crime as an act injurious to society. Still less do I refer to the fact that murders are frequently associated with economic crimes under conditions in which the incapacity of the criminal to procure the means of subsistence by honest, productive work would appear to be the cause of the crime. This type of murder is in fact much rarer than is commonly supposed, and the real cause is not merely the incapacity of the criminal to maintain himself by honest work but also, without exception, deeper psychological defects. In this connection I mean by weakness a general unfitness or incapacity for satisfying the demands which life imposes upon one and all, irrespective of social environment and other external conditions. I hope in the course of the following exposition to be able to make quite clear both the import of this conception and its foundations. Its value as a theory or as a working hypothesis must of course be judged by the evidence submitted. But it should be emphasized at this point that the weakness or unfitness premised in this conception is by no means always the deepest psychic reality in each individual criminal simply because it is the deepest common to them all. On the contrary it is quite often possible to discover the origin of the general unfitness in peculiar, individual psychic defects. It should perhaps also be remembered that the weakness in question may naturally always be traceable to some physical defect

of an organic or functional character, which is of course in turn obviously a matter for medical science rather than for criminal psychology to investigate. Moreover, it may be mentioned in this connection that during my observation of criminals other than murderers I have often been tempted to extend the same diagnosis beyond cases of murder to crime in general, so that the thesis might be simplified and condensed in the dictum : weakness is of the essence of all crime. But, at least for the present, I think it probable that various less serious crimes spring from psychic qualities which—though they of course involve shortcomings from the point of view of social ethics—must be regarded as positive psychological forces ; or at any rate they cannot be characterized offhand as defects, as weakness in the sense of the word here employed.

This weakness, or general unfitness, is found among murderers in various forms, which, superficially regarded, most certainly do not appear to possess any psychological affinity, but which are all, at bottom, means of escape from the realities of life, with which the socially unfit are unable to cope. The means of escape most frequently selected is, quite naturally, the most convenient, i.e., self-deception. For thoughtless and contented criminals this is the broad highway of escape from all the harassing realities of existence. Especially when one becomes familiar with these cheerful self-deceivers under life sentence, one is astonished to find how numerous they are and how by their self-deception they have the supreme and amazing faculty of transforming even the most palpable and intractable of all external realities. The next most common means of deliverance from reality is what may briefly be described as renunciation, i.e., the consistent renunciation of every definite individual effort and the assumption of an attitude of complete passivity towards everything which is not essential to the mere maintenance of animal existence. Among such criminals one very often encounters a strong consciousness, tinged with distress, that something has been

radically wrong in their lives from the beginning, and this feeling constantly incites them to seek for the reason for their never having really lived. For the same reason, especially in prison, it appears that brooding is the most characteristic feature of their psychic life. Such tortured men are also comparatively numerous among murderers. Among criminals in general one finds in respect of happiness or suffering, as also in all other respects, only extreme types; one seeks in vain for moderation in the criminal world. A third avenue of escape from reality, in the absence of all strong personal feelings and interests, is the attempted conformity with all the practical rules of life and the moral standards of their environment. In this way they sneak through life in a sort of sham-life. This type of murderer is without doubt less common than the two preceding types, but from the point of view of criminal psychology it merits special attention because in most other criminals one also finds quite distinct traces of the same psychological process, which is the central and decisive influence in their psychic life.

It is in accordance with these various manifestations of unfitness, or, more exactly, according to the various psychic qualities which give rise to them, that I have divided the criminals here treated into various groups. I have already pointed out that this classification is incomplete, in so far as there undoubtedly exist among murderers other methods of escape from reality than self-deception, renunciation and shamming. It should also be emphasized that the groups are neither sharply defined nor homogeneous in the sense that other characteristics than those arising from the defects above mentioned may not also play an important rôle in individual cases. On the contrary, one finds almost everywhere, in each of the groups, more or less pronounced manifestations of the psychic qualities that constitute the essential feature of the other groups. This is especially true of those psychological conditions which render possible self-deception, the evil consequences of which in the life of a

criminal can in general scarcely be over-estimated. But it is also true to a considerable extent, as has been said before, as regards the psychological conditions of shamming, and, finally, though to a less extent, as regards the tendency to renunciation. And of course every individual criminal, despite the essential defects he has in common with other criminals, possesses a psychological individuality at least as distinct as that of any ordinary human being. It is moreover obvious that the real import and justification of this classification can only be made clear in the course of the exposition of the psychic life of the criminals in question, and that its value must be determined by the extent to which it contributes to the classification and elucidation of that which is psychologically essential in crime.

In accordance with what I have said above, the object which I have had in view has been to penetrate as deeply as possible into, and to throw as much light as possible upon, the psychic life of a small number of individual criminals who seemed to me to be especially typical of larger groups.

But to this definition of the purpose of these essays the following remarks must be added.

In the first place it must be expressly emphasized that a *complete* knowledge of the psychic life of others can, naturally, never be acquired. Every human soul is indeed, even if not as inexhaustible, yet in any case as inscrutable, as life itself. To seek to express the psychic life of a human being in a single sentence would therefore be as foolish as to seek to include the whole of existence in a single formula. What we can achieve by the study of individual psychology is at most to make clear the essential qualities of the individual, i.e., the qualities which have set their seal upon him or have suffused him and have shown themselves stronger than all others and have therefore become the most significant in his life, or, in other words, the decisive forces, or complex of forces, in his psychic life. It may be of importance to bear this in mind, since psychology, like every other science, inevitably seeks to refer the unknown to as

small a number of known facts as possible, and the history of psychological research, even in modern times, offers all too many examples of the setting up of such universal principles pretending to solve all the riddles of the human soul.

Meanwhile there are certain questions connected with the conception of psychological understanding which are of greater importance.

To obtain a clear idea of the psychic life of another is the same thing as to make it intelligible to oneself and to others, and to understand any particular fact is the same thing as to bring it into relation with some already known group of facts.

But in the last resort we only know psychological facts from our own experience, and psychologically speaking, therefore, to understand is the same thing as to relate to the experiences of our own life : of course not in the sense that we can only understand in others what we have completely experienced ourselves or therefore directly associate with our own experience—for in that case no two individuals would, as a rule, ever understand each other—but in the sense that a person can never understand feelings, instincts, motives, etc., which have always been *completely* unfamiliar to him, i.e., of which the least shadow of an idea has never passed into his soul. Just as a person born blind or deaf cannot understand the sensation excited in others by tone or colour (unless possibly they have acquired some conception of them through their other senses and by explanations and analogy), so also a person can never understand the psychic life of his fellow creatures in those matters which from birth he has lacked every disposition to feel or experience. Even though the psychological affinity or community necessary to understand another person is infinitesimally small, and is such that one would never have dreamed of its ~~ex~~istence, still less have ever become conscious of it if one had not deliberately endeavoured to draw it forth from the shades of the subconscious mind, or had one's

attention drawn to it by others, yet in any case it is upon this community of experience that the possibility of understanding rests in the last resort ; it is the *sine qua non* of all psychological understanding.

For these reasons I have consistently endeavoured in these pages to bring to light the points of resemblance between the psychic life of the average human being and that of the criminal types here described. In each of the following studies I have proceeded from the average human qualities which seemed to me essentially identical with the determining characteristics of the criminals under consideration, qualities which in ordinary life appear more or less innocent or at most as serious weaknesses of character, but which in criminals, owing to the absence of positive forces which might restrain them, or more precisely, cause them to sink away and vanish as insignificant in their growth, have developed unchecked and assumed the mastery of their lives, until finally they produce criminals.

It is consequently not sufficient in studies of this kind to seek to determine the predominating characteristics of the criminal, it is necessary also to endeavour to bring to light the exact corresponding characteristics of the average human being, which as a rule are naturally seldom the object of reflection or attention.

And that, as I believe, is what we unconsciously do in ordinary life when for any special reason we exert ourselves to understand a fellow creature. Especially if we are confronted by a person whose psychic life appears to belong to another world than ours, e.g., an Australian nigger or an illiterate Russian peasant, we instinctively begin, if from motives of curiosity or for other reasons we wish to understand what is going on in his mind, to search in our own minds or in our experience of others for conceptions, impressions, feelings, motives, instincts, etc., which offer resemblances, however faint, to his psychic life. But even in respect of persons belonging to our own sphere of life we undoubtedly adopt the same method, as everyone can

easily convince himself, as soon as we desire, in a deeper sense of the word, to understand them.

It may possibly appear *a priori* an unnecessarily painful task thus to seek out—not to say dig out—points of contact between the normal and the criminal psychic life, between ordinary human weakness and shortcomings on the one hand and the characteristics of gross criminals on the other hand. But, in the first place, we ought to achieve thereby a firmly established conception—as I believe will in fact appear from these studies—of the enormous difference between them, and, in the second place, there is, as far as I can see, no other means of comprehending or elucidating the psychic life of criminals or of obtaining information concerning their criminal psychology.

In order to avoid misunderstanding it is necessary to emphasize here that understanding in the sense of the word here used does not denote the least degree of condonation or approval. The well-known phrase “to understand all is to forgive all” is, in my opinion, the most fundamental falsehood that has ever been uttered in the whole history of civilization. Were it correct, then all research into criminal psychology would evidently be profoundly subversive of morals and its purpose would be a sort of moral nihilism, in so far as its object is undoubtedly to understand, among other things, the psychic life of persons who have committed the most outrageous crimes, condemned in all ages by the conscience of mankind. But happily this dogma is not only theoretically unfounded—for why should understanding imply forgiveness? but all practical experience also shows it to be fundamentally wrong. Especially in research in criminal psychology we find that the deeper we succeed in penetrating into the psychic life of, for example, a murderer, the more morally revolting the crime he has committed usually appears, and the more profound the moral horror which we feel in its presence. It is true that our indignation is directed less against the individual, whose conduct, as we shall realize more and more in the course

of these studies, is determined in each particular case by circumstances, environment and upbringing, than against the act itself, which at the same time appears more and more vivid and is fully illuminated in all its details; the moral condemnation is directed, that is, more and more against the evil rather than against the evildoer. Nor should it be difficult in ordinary life to confirm the view that our aversion is shifted from the person to the act in proportion as we obtain a fuller knowledge of what has operated in the mind of the former and at the same time of the real significance of the latter. If for example an acquaintance commits a morally revolting act, of which we had thought him incapable, and we therefore seek to investigate and elucidate, or, in other words, to understand his inner motives, then as a rule our aversion to the act grows in the same degree as our aversion to the doer diminishes. This is a fact which has perhaps been commonly overlooked, but anybody should be able to convince himself of its truth by testing his own experience of the comparatively innocent or more serious moral delinquencies of one of his own acquaintance. I myself have sometimes had an opportunity of speaking to mothers visiting their sons under life-sentence in prison, and I have scarcely anywhere found such a deep moral revulsion against crime as among these women, though they naturally thoroughly understood and forgave the criminals. That such an unfortunate dogma should have struck so deep roots in the human consciousness as this one undoubtedly has done during the last century, and that it should exercise such authority, even to-day, that one finds it as the motto of a comprehensive work by a well-known criminal psychologist, is due partly to the fact that it requires some reflection, and indeed is sometimes a matter of considerable difficulty, to distinguish between the act and the doer, especially so long as the latter is not rendered innocuous. But above all things it is certainly due to the fact that this dogma once upon a time opened up new vistas and still, thanks to its attractive formulation, remains one



of the most easily retained and easy justifications for the numerous tendencies, of varying origins, towards moral indifference and moral nihilism which have developed in our day and which threaten our whole civilization in its present stage of development. I have thought it of importance to emphasize sharply the difference between understanding and forgiveness because the widespread erroneous conception of them is apt to undermine confidence in, and stimulate popular prejudice against, criminal psychology, as well as against various other sciences.

Reverting to the method of enquiry adopted in the following studies in criminal psychology—i.e., personal visits to as many criminals as possible in order to obtain direct impressions of their psychic life—it may at first sight appear doubtful, or even improbable, whether by such means it is really possible to learn to know a person completely, i.e., to penetrate to his innermost, determining characteristics.

I shall therefore now attempt to give an account of some at least of the possibilities I have discovered during repeated and exhaustive conversations with criminals of obtaining information concerning their fundamental characteristics, or, in other words, some of the paths I have explored and the rules I have followed in my studies.

In the first place should be mentioned the fundamental principle which—at first, naturally, by instinct, and only later more and more consciously and deliberately—I adopted in those studies, namely, to disregard as far as possible in conversation with persons whose essential characteristics I have sought to discover whatever is palpably and directly obvious and determined by the conversation, or, in a word, the purely formal content of these utterances, and to direct attention to the connection between these utterances and the inner, spontaneous, really decisive forces in their psychic lives. In other words, I have sought, step by step, to determine the entirely spontaneous psychological characteristics in their utterances, asserted without possibility

of control by reflection. Perhaps this principle might be most briefly enunciated by saying that in order to know a human being properly, one ought not to listen to his words or to his conscious sentiments and thoughts but to the expression of his unconscious psychic life. And yet, to avoid misunderstanding, it must be expressly stated that this does not in any way imply under-estimation of, or indifference to, his conscious life, with which one becomes familiar in any case, and the significance of which in his psychic life as a whole is consequently ever present to the observer. This principle does not, of course, afford a magic key to the portals of the sub-conscious life by which they may be thrown wide open so that anybody who wishes to know the inmost characteristics may see them revealed without further effort. We are here primarily concerned only with the possibility of penetrating to the essential points in the psychic life of others. But on the other hand it should be evident that this principle offers considerable possibilities of so doing, or at any rate it enables any person interested in psychology easily to convince himself by questioning his own daily experience. So far as I can see, it is just this principle which we all unconsciously apply when for any special reason we wish thoroughly to understand a person. In our usual association with our fellow creatures, whether at work or at play, we naturally fasten upon the common bonds of social intercourse, work, exchange of thought, amusements, etc., and our attention is usually directed exclusively to what I have called the formal content of the intercourse of our companion. But as soon as our intercourse with a certain person is no longer governed by common interests, but by a desire to acquire a knowledge of his inmost being, we immediately abandon the formal content of his utterance and begin unconsciously to seek for whatever indication of his inner life appears in his speech independently of, or even in spite of, his conscious will. In this connection it ought to be easy to establish the fact that practically every utterance, if observed and analysed

in this manner, discloses important glimpses into the deepest complex of forces in the life of the speaker.

Among the practically inexhaustible consequences of this fundamental principle, or, in other words, among the rules which, in accordance with it, I have endeavoured to observe as rigorously as possible in these studies, I may mention one which is certainly of the utmost importance : constantly to direct the attention to what the speaker regards in his own mind as obvious or of universal application.

The human tendency to judge others by oneself, i.e., to ascribe to others the same feelings, ambitions, desires, motives, thoughts, views and opinions, etc., as we possess ourselves, is an acknowledged fact so familiar that it has been proverbial since time immemorial. But like all other popular beliefs, even if based on the experience of thousands of years, so too this one must be accepted with caution. For this belief is not—as its form would seem to imply, and as one is undoubtedly sometimes tempted to assume in studies in criminal psychology—of such unlimited application that it is generally impossible for human beings to be inwardly convinced that others are fundamentally differently constituted to themselves. Of course, in this respect human capacity varies as infinitely as in every other respect. As a general rule one may assume that education, and especially experience, develop the capacity for sharply distinguishing between one's own personal qualities and those of others, even though uneducated persons are sometimes equipped by nature with amazing superiority in this respect, and even though conversely, highly educated persons—or at least very learned persons—may remain amazingly naïf and inexperienced. Criminals, however, as is well known, belong to a comparatively large extent to the uneducated classes and are, moreover, incredibly blind in this respect, possibly owing to the fact that, like habitual criminals, they are, both in and out of prison, cut off from other society than their own. This blindness

is probably due in the main, however, to their inability to retain impressions from the outer world and in general to retain interest in anything else but themselves. Or it may be due to other defects upon which I cannot dwell here. In any case the average criminal, in this as in so many other points, suffers from prematurely arrested development, and thus really resembles a child or a primitive creature in unconsciously assuming that all human beings look out upon life in the same way as they do. Under these circumstances it is scarcely necessary to insist further on the great significance in criminal psychology of always seizing upon what the criminal regards as obvious and of general application—i.e., as coinciding with the views and convictions of others, whether in regard to moral standards or to other rules necessary to human life on earth—and, in conclusion, upon any significant indications of human character: what a criminal regards in his mind as obvious to everybody is, practically without exception, a direct manifestation of his own inmost character.

Whether he proclaims what he has at heart quite candidly because it has never occurred to him that anybody could really have an opposite point of view, even though most people for practical reasons are hypocritical and misrepresent themselves, or whether he is ashamed when confronted by strangers—or more correctly, is shy of his own opinion because he has become convinced that the State and society quite seriously condemn it—and consequently only expresses it unintentionally, i.e., as something obvious and therefore as a mere assumption in otherwise unimportant reasoning, it is, in every case in which the essential diverges from the normal, an equally distinct index to his fundamental defects. I shall have frequent occasion in the following studies to indicate the field of application of this rule in studies in criminal psychology. Moreover, it is by no means without importance in everyday psychology, as may easily be seen especially by observation of the psychic life of children.

Among the consequences of the fundamental principle

of individual psychological investigation above enunciated may be mentioned another rule, which one is constantly tempted to ignore in studies in criminal psychology, and which has been violated to a very great extent in all sorts of attempts thoroughly to understand criminals, whether in seeking to approach and influence them or scientifically to determine the inner causes of their criminal acts. I refer to the rule never by any means whatsoever to attempt to influence, induce or force confidential statements or confessions concerning their past lives from the persons under observation, but, on the contrary, to allow them to speak quite freely and undisturbed on any subject which is for the moment in their minds, or is of general interest to them, or merely crops up in their thoughts. If necessary, they should even be encouraged to do so.

It should be emphasized in this connection that under no circumstances in psychological investigations should one uncritically accept a confession as conclusive evidence of the psychic life of the speaker, even if it is made in profound good faith and after most serious introspection, for the simple reason that human beings have no knowledge of their sub-conscious psychic life and also because the function of psychology is evidently to acquire knowledge not only of the conceptions of human beings of themselves but also of everything which occurs or has occurred within them, or, in other words, not only of their subjective conceptions of, but also the whole of the objective reality of, their psychic life. Of course the capacity for self-knowledge varies to an infinite degree according to the degree of individual culture, introspective or extraspective temperament, etc., but fundamentally, in the nature of things, no man can know himself. Concerning criminals more particularly, they are as a rule, partly because of their imperfect education, but especially on account of their above-mentioned self-deception, amazingly ignorant as a class, of the determining forces of their psychic life. Their conceptions of themselves are generally so distorted that they scarcely bear any re-

semblance to reality. Confession, therefore, cannot in psychological studies, and especially in criminal psychology, be regarded as differing from any other material for investigation.

If, bearing this in mind, we seek other avenues by which to penetrate to the deepest human qualities, it will be found that even the most honest confession, whether it relates to the prime motive of a single action or to the deepest impulses to action in general, is comparatively valueless in comparison with the utterances made without any intention of revealing the inmost being of the speaker concerning the more or less important matters, past or present, which for the moment occupy his mind. Self-confession can at most afford an image produced in conflict with innumerable unconscious restraints. It is necessarily superficial, incomplete and stereotyped. But when a person speaks freely of whatever is for the moment present in his mind we see his living psychic life directly before our eyes and are enabled to make constant observations and therefore also to penetrate to his inmost being.

In ordinary life we all, indeed, apparently act, save in exceptional circumstances, in direct opposition to this principle. Here it seems obvious in seeking to discover human motives either for a particular act or for general conduct, that the simplest, safest and only natural procedure is to seek to induce a person to open out and himself describe his motives, his inner experiences, etc.

And this procedure is without any doubt the correct one in ordinary life, in which mankind in general naturally has no reason to seek for other impulses than those which each man within himself consciously recognizes as sufficient and final, and for which he accepts full responsibility.

But the knowledge of others which thus generally suffices in ordinary life is obviously not the same as the knowledge we seek to obtain in psychological studies. In the extraordinary circumstances of daily life above referred to, i.e., when for some special reason we seek to acquire a more

profound knowledge than usual of a human being, we tend to a very great extent unconsciously to follow this rule, and to seize less upon what he has to say concerning himself than upon what appears from his various utterances in other circumstances.

I should like here to put forward as another of the consequences of the above-mentioned fundamental principle a rule which ought to be obvious and which we always unconsciously, even if reluctantly, adopt in personal psychological observations, but which we appear generally to shrink from openly proclaiming and systematically applying because it appears that the results of its application must always be incapable of objective proof and perhaps, on occasion, must be subjectively uncertain. I refer to the rule that one should observe the manner in which a person, either intentionally or unconsciously, behaves in conversation with just as much care, and analyse with just as much thoroughness, as we observe anything which he frankly discloses in speech. There is in my opinion, as based on my experience in all these studies, no reason whatever for not consciously, deliberately and systematically employing, in all investigations of this kind, this method or possibility of penetrating into and illuminating the psychic life of others. An expression of the face, a glance, a smile, a gesture, a tone, an involuntary movement, etc., is clearly always a reflection of some conscious or subconscious reaction in the psychic life, and it may in certain circumstances be just as free from ambiguity and just as significant as, or even more significant than, any speech whatever.

But all this is a well-known fact in ordinary psychology. In our conception and judgment of others we are all influenced every day and every hour by these thousand and one details of behaviour, which we are accustomed to call *imponderable* because we regard them as escaping analysis, or rather, perhaps, because we look upon their influence as so obvious that any analysis of them is in practice superfluous. If as a rule we allow this influence to pass uncon-

controlled and unconsidered it is also because we have never doubted its justification, and even the most hasty reflection would call to our minds innumerable examples of the rôle which such imponderabilia have played in determining our own attitude towards others. The question may even be raised whether these inarticulate expressions of human personality do not exercise a far greater influence over us—and are therefore of even greater importance to our success and power in life—than we are as a rule disposed to admit.

But if such be the case, there can scarcely be any doubt that systematic observation and careful analysis of the whole of a person's outward bearing during a sufficient number of conversations offers a considerable possibility of obtaining an insight into the essentials of his psychic life.

And if in the process one is undoubtedly compelled to rely upon subjective impressions, it by no means follows that one can only achieve subjective certainty by this means. For each one of these impressions (or more exactly, the result which the analysis of each such impression brings to light) is compared not only with all similar impressions, but also with those obtained by other means (i.e., with the result yielded by an analysis of the latter) as well as with the external circumstances of the person's life as established by the documentary evidence of depositions, by reports of the minister of religion in the parish where he is domiciled, etc. In this way one manifestly achieves a high degree of objective certainty concerning those impressions which remain unaffected by all these confrontations.

In judging the possibilities of the psychological method which I have briefly described one must not overlook or forget the fact that the results can be checked by reciprocal confrontation; that the variety of these possibilities consequently offers a considerable degree of certainty; and that in the last resort I had access to judicially established facts to check my results.

I cannot, in the nature of things, as already indicated, give an account here of *all* the methods of discovering by



personal observation the determining characteristics in the psychic life of others by which in the course of my studies I have gained a deeper insight and which I have been able by degrees to test systematically. Owing to the nature and number of these a full account of them could only be presented in a special treatise. In order that the final results of the following chapters may not from the outset appear as more or less arbitrary creations of the imagination I have merely desired in this introduction to illustrate by a few examples the fundamental principle in the method of study by which I have obtained these results. If I have succeeded in this purpose, then all the possibilities of which I have availed myself in these studies should become quite clear in the account of their application in concrete cases, as shown in the following chapters. In this connection it should be emphasized that I should clearly not have achieved the object I set out to attain—to throw as far as possible a clear light on the determining factors in the psychic development of the persons in question from a period as far back in their childhood as I could reach until the day they committed a crime—and the method I employed in my studies would consequently not have satisfied the demands made upon it, if in my final results I had not advanced to psychic facts and processes of which the persons under observation had either never been conscious themselves, or of which at any rate they had lost recollection, and which they would therefore deny in good faith if they were presented to them. For in the sense of the word here employed, a description of the psychic development of a person can naturally never be regarded as complete if it does not also bring to light, above all things, the sub-conscious impulses within him. My method of study therefore has from the beginning consistently been directed towards, and adapted to, this end.

It may, *a priori*, appear rash or even scientifically unpermissible to attribute in this way to the various periods of a person's life psychic experiences of various kinds, such

as motives, ambitions, desires, hopes, sufferings, wishes, etc., which they might in reality in all good faith repudiate, and in reading the following studies without any knowledge or thought of the means by which I achieved the results presented much of what I have gleaned and presented of the unconscious psychic life of the individuals under observation might certainly appear as insufficiently substantiated, or even entirely without foundation.

But from all that has been said it will appear beyond dispute that the method I have adopted in these studies in any case presents some possibility of penetrating into the psychic life of an individual and of determining what is, or has been, present in his mind, though it may never have emerged from the darkness of subconsciousness or have assumed such conscious form as to leave tangible traces in his mind.

To what extent I have succeeded in availing myself of these possibilities, or, in other words, to what extent I have achieved by this method the object I had in view can of course only be shown by the following chapters.

In conclusion I must specially observe that whenever in this introduction or in the following pages I refer to criminals, I do not, of course, refer to *all* criminals, including occasional criminals, but only to those which one usually designates as habitual. The names given to the various criminals, their relations, neighbours, friends, etc., are of course fictitious.

## I

### SELF-DECEPTION

As I have already remarked, the fateful significance of self-deception in the life of a criminal can scarcely be exaggerated: criminals are a race addicted to extremes of self-deception. The more or less innocent tendency of the ordinary, average human being to shun reality, or to transform it, as far as possible, whenever it is inconvenient, appears in the criminal released, as it were, from all restraint or check, and expands and develops into the most incredible forms. This occurs, be it said, not only among the class of murderers we are here considering, in whose life the causes and effects of self-deception are the dominating influences, but also among practically all criminals, not only in their apparently unimportant daily habits, but also in the decisive moments of their lives. Self-deception is a psychological weapon of defence which every criminal must employ to an immeasurably greater extent than other human beings. For that reason there would appear to be every justification for giving the first place in this work to self-deception among murderers.

The person who appears to me to be the most typical representative of this class, and whom I shall call Arnold Winge, had committed a robbery in the course of which he employed violence resulting in death. At the trial it was held that there was not sufficient evidence of Winge's intention to kill and he was consequently convicted of robbery with violence and not of murder. During my conversations with Winge in prison, I soon became convinced

that he would not have been deterred from the robbery even if it had been quite clear to him that he must commit murder in order to achieve his purpose, and for that reason I have not hesitated to include him among the class of murderers.

In order to give a proper orientation of the course of events in his life of crime I may by way of introduction here present the following facts as elicited at the trial. These facts will of course be supplemented and completed in the course of my account of his psychology.

Winge grew up in what was to all appearances a respectable bourgeois home in a small foreign town, where he can scarcely have been exposed to any considerable extent to depraving influences. Relatively to the economic circumstances of his parents he received a very good education at school in his native town and, according to the certificate of the headmaster, he was an industrious, gifted and well-behaved pupil, who on several occasions won prizes. At the age of fourteen he left his home in order to attend a commercial school in a large neighbouring town, where at the same time he was engaged as a volunteer in a draper's shop. During the succeeding four or five years he held not less than ten positions. From all his employers, without a single exception, reports were received during the trial stating that during these years he had always performed his duties to their complete satisfaction and had generally distinguished himself. His last employer, from whom he had stolen considerable sums of money, certified, in a letter accompanying a petition for mercy after the death sentence, that until the day he committed embezzlement he had always conducted himself blamelessly. During these years, however, he made the acquaintance of one Gustav Meyer, who, though only a few months older than Winge, had already travelled for some years past in Europe and beyond. According to Winge's evidence at the trial it was especially Meyer's glowing accounts of life abroad in large cities which awakened his desire to escape from the narrow and

oppressive conditions at home. One day, therefore, when he was sent to the post-office with a letter containing about 10,000 crowns, he called in Meyer and proposed to him that they should seize this money and escape to Paris, where they would certainly find it easy to obtain lucrative employment. Meyer fell in with the plan and the same evening they travelled to Paris, whence they proceeded almost immediately to Lyons, Milan and Rome. After some weeks they returned from Italy to Paris, where they met an acquaintance of Meyer from his earlier travels, a female impersonator of the name of Valgevski, who proposed that they should appear with him and his dressers in a big variety turn. Allured by Valgevski's representations of enormous salaries, they followed him first to a small German town, where he had an engagement for a few weeks, and subsequently to London, to buy scenery for their great variety turn, for which purpose Valgevski borrowed about 3,000 crowns from them, though they confided to him the means by which they had obtained possession of the money. In London they found life very expensive, and when their money began to run out and Valgevski had failed to obtain an engagement, they resolved to journey to Sweden, where they could live more cheaply, and wait there for an engagement in England. On their arrival at the town where the robbery was subsequently committed Winge and Meyer had only fifty crowns left of the stolen 10,000 crowns. Valgevski paid board and lodging for them for six weeks at an hotel and finally left them twenty crowns each when he departed from the town. He also promised to send them more from Brussels, where he declared that he had secured an engagement, but when Winge wrote to him some time after to ask for money, he replied that he regarded such letters as blackmail and refused to assist them any further. Between Valgevski's departure and the robbery two months elapsed, during which time they were practically without any means and in growing need and distress. A Mohammedan circus artist, whose acquaintance they had

made in the hotel, succeeded in inducing the proprietors to give them a little longer credit ; two unmarried women whose acquaintance they had made through Valgevski sometimes gave them food and a few coppers, but apart from these charities they had lived by pawning their few belongings : first a watch and a cigarette case, then their shoes, waistcoats, underclothes, etc. Finally they were threatened with ejectment if they did not pay their bill within a week. It was then that Winge proposed to Meyer to send a money order addressed to themselves in order to lure the postman to their hotel room, where they might stun him, seize his registered post and then take flight to Brussels, to get money from Valgevski, and subsequently reach Paris and obtain work.\* Winge had first derived the idea of this plan from a newspaper account of a similar coup some years before. Meyer agreed to the plan and they resolved that he should stun the postman by striking him on the head with a poker whilst Winge was receipting the money order. They made all their preparations for the robbery and sent money orders to Winge under his assumed name not less than three times, but each time for various accidental reasons they shrank at the last moment from the execution of their plan. Only when ejectment was imminent and they were so destitute that their means were only sufficient for the postage of an insured letter, in which they placed Valgevski's note of hand, could they agree to execute their plan whatever might happen. When, the following morning, the postman came up to their room and moved towards the writing table by the window in order that Winge might sign the receipt, Meyer struck him on the head from behind with two pokers bound together, and then, when he turned round, delivered about ten more blows on the head, whilst Winge prevented him from defending himself. When Winge received a blow on the hand during

\* In Sweden and other foreign countries money orders, registered and insured letters are delivered by a special postman, who carries with him cash and notes to pay against receipt the value of money orders. He thus offers considerable temptation to thieves. (Translator.)

the affray he let go his hold and the postman collapsed unconscious on a sofa, with the blood streaming from the back of his head and from his temples. Winge nevertheless still thought he observed signs of life in the postman and struck him two blows on the head with all his strength. Suddenly exhausted, he asked Meyer to continue, but the latter said it was unnecessary and they together searched the postman's satchel, in which they found 400 crowns and the postman's pocket-book, containing five crowns. They then forced the body under the bed and placed a blanket over the end where the head protruded. They washed off the blood, hastily arranged the room and left the hotel. On the way to the station they shared out the money, made a few purchases on Meyer's account, redeemed their pledges, etc., took a west-bound train at midday intending to embark on a ship for Denmark, and thence to journey to Paris. During the day they came to the conclusion for some reason or other that they would be safer in Russia. They therefore descended at a wayside station and went on foot to the nearest town, where they were immediately arrested. They were both condemned to death, but the sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life.

It is clear that this summary of the depositions and evidence contributes nothing to illuminate the psychology of the two criminals. Behind the picture it gives of two youths who, after committing embezzlement, sank deeper and deeper into poverty, until they finally committed robbery with violence, might be concealed any criminal psychology whatever, and it very soon became clear in prison that Winge and Meyer—who were psychologically indistinguishable on the evidence at the trial—had no common characteristics whatever. The latter indeed had to be removed after some years to a lunatic asylum. It may be noted in this connection that only very rarely do psycho-criminological facts appear in the reports of trials, which is easily explained by the function and development of the criminal law. It is only in so far as they are necessary

for the proof of guilt or to determine the sentence that psychological reports are entertained by the courts, and such reports have, for perfectly sound reasons, into which I cannot enter here, not hitherto gone beyond the most superficial considerations. But it follows from this that if one proceeds in studies in criminal psychology solely on the basis of the evidence and depositions one necessarily gropes in the dark and builds upon arbitrary surmises. The only safe road to psycho-criminological knowledge, based on reality, is by personal investigation. However, I had not persisted long in my visits to Winge in prison before the colourless picture of his life afforded by the report of the trial became animated by a real living individuality. Among the criminals belonging to one or other of the two groups to be treated in the following chapters it was often a long and laborious task to arrive at a perfectly clear conception of the determining characteristics of their psychic lives. In the case of Winge and all others of his type the deepest characteristics were revealed, so to speak, as in an open book, in everything they had to say to me concerning the past, the present, or their future hopes. These criminals were on the whole completely happy by temperament, and like all others of their class were filled with a constant desire to share with others their satisfaction with themselves and with life in general. But strangely enough I also found among them a great deal of the impulse which urges many other prisoners to open their hearts in confession, i.e., the constant longing of the weak for understanding, approval and support of their past and present life. For this reason it may easily be understood that, especially when confined to their cells, they ardently seized every possibility of unburdening themselves, and that in the long run they neither could, nor would, practise any deception, since indeed, after sentence, it would have been quite purposeless to do so.

As a rule it was naturally the attitude instinctively adopted by the criminals to prison discipline which first



afforded an opportunity of observing their peculiarities. Since the question may possibly be raised to what extent it is really possible to learn to know people by studying them when confined in such artificial and, as regards initiative, such completely negative conditions as prevail in a prison, I should like to insist here that although one must naturally in the last resort regard one's observation of their life at liberty as of decisive importance, yet on the other hand prison life, and especially solitary confinement, offers, just because of the complete segregation of the criminals from their ordinary milieu, many opportunities for important observations which could never be made during their life out of prison, even if it were possible to bring them under observation. In any case, Winge's reaction to a life of hard labour was well worth noticing. I began my visits to him at a time which is usually of critical importance in the life of all criminals condemned to long terms of imprisonment, that is to say about two years after sentence has been passed, when on the one hand solitary confinement has, as a rule, exercised to the full its psychologically depressing influence, and on the other hand the expected comparative liberty of common prison life was still too remote to operate as a stimulus—the preliminary solitary confinement was at the time of my studies three years and could not, as now, be commuted to one year. Not even Winge had been able to escape the terrible oppression of the two first years in prison, and there was something subdued in the whole of his behaviour during my first visit. But this relative calm in his psychic life, scarcely perceptible to himself, was all that the sentence of death and subsequent commutation to penal servitude for life had effected in him. He never consciously concerned himself with anything that prison life imposed upon him except the amazing advantages which, in his eyes, every criminal enjoyed in a Swedish prison, and the conclusion which he drew from them had evidently been to him a source of renewed self-confidence and strength during the years he had been imprisoned. My efforts to

discover in him at least some effects of the gravity of the punishment were always met by instinctive protests and descriptions of these extraordinary advantages, which it evidently satisfied his pride to recount. In the first place he enlarged on the very humane treatment of the prison staff—especially of the governor of the prison, whom he never wearied of praising—and of which he had always new examples to provide, during his period of solitary confinement. For a moment I suspected that all this gratitude to his gaolers was either a form of ingratiating, which naturally flourishes in prison, or else conscious acting with the hope of being brought to the notice of the governor and of being rewarded. But it appeared to me in the course of time to be quite genuine and as such it rendered him in imagination much greater service than hypocrisy could ever have done in reality. It became for him an irrefutable proof that what he had done could not possibly constitute so grave a crime as he had imagined during the trial, and especially after sentence. How could the whole prison staff, from the gaolers up to the governor, have been so well disposed towards him if he had really been so loathsome a criminal? Nobody had ever said so much as an unkind word to him. A tendency to the same process of thought is to be found in many, if not all, first offenders convicted of felony. There exists in all of them, arising from defects which I shall analyse in the last chapter, a mass of extraordinary primitive and brutal instincts of retribution which makes them, when they are caught, expect blows and hunger and servile labour in prison, and which, when they find none of these, rehabilitates them in their own esteem and makes them feel relatively innocent. But it is only among the criminals here under discussion that this tendency is fully and consciously developed and incorporated in a system of self-deception which, within the prison walls, helps to protect them against the realities of their position. Another element in the system almost as important as the friendly treatment they received, was the pleasant work

they were set to do. Its greatest charm for Winge was certainly that he did not feel himself obliged to concern himself with it more than he felt inclined. Such an attitude is not uncommon among prisoners, doubtless because a prisoner is to all intents and purposes never kept at his work by disciplinary measures. The complete absence of any diversions gives birth to a more than sufficient inward discipline. In most cases, however, this doubly illusory right of self-determination did not play any important rôle. But to Winge it was, of course, a reality of extraordinary significance. Winge was, like other self-deceiving murderers, neither physically nor psychologically unfit for work in the literal sense of the word. On the contrary he was at times capable of doing excellent work, both thorough and intelligent, that is, so long as some extraordinary, and of course quite ridiculous, hope stimulated his energies. But as soon as the illusion vanished his work became a daily and hourly misery to him, from which he always found some new and illusory reason to escape. In the sense of capacity for serious work (unless he was directly compelled to do it) Winge was on the other hand certainly unfit. In prison, where Winge could not entirely escape work or imagine, for example, that within a few years it would make him a multi-millionaire, it became necessary for him to transform it into a pleasant pastime. In this he was so completely successful that the fine, light and varied work with which he busied himself just sufficiently to prevent the day seeming too long, became in fact one of the subjects on which he discoursed most enthusiastically in his descriptions of the excellence of Swedish prisons. Among their innumerable merits, as seen by Winge, only two more need be mentioned : the good food and the excellent library. With regard to the food, Winge had instinctively seized upon its two real merits, and lavished superlative praise on its sufficiency and its suitability to the sedentary prison life. On the other hand, its great defect from an ordinary dietetic point of view, i.e., its monotony, which would have been an unremitting torture to many prisoners if they had not been

enabled as a reward for good behaviour to add to their rations by purchase, he had simply not noticed. And when he spoke warmly of his reading in prison he maintained in all seriousness, as a compensation for his unhappy fate, that he would certainly never have had an opportunity of studying so many good books if he had not committed the crime for which he had been sentenced. Strangely enough I have heard exactly the same thought expressed by several criminals—though not under life-sentence—of the same psychological type as Winge. The books which he borrowed from the prison library were specially books on geography and travel, which, for easily intelligible reasons were, in addition to works on religion, most in demand. This reading not infrequently kindled his imagination to such an extent that he would relate long adventures, experiences and strange happenings from the books he had in his cell, and he would always show them to me with special pride. It was evident that he identified himself so completely with the heroes of these adventures that the perusal of them did not awaken any longing for liberty, for he lived in imagination in those foreign lands. Sometimes I even had the impression that he did not envy his heroes, because he felt it more or less consciously more pleasant to experience their wonderful adventures in peace, comfort and security than amidst the many risks and difficulties of real life. These two last mentioned bright spots in his prison life contributed perhaps directly more to his well-being and comfort than to his real self-respect, though indirectly they were also a great support to the latter. Behind all his triumphant descriptions of his uniformly pleasant life in prison there always lay the palpable thought: "Can anyone believe that I should have been permitted such a life if I had been an ordinary criminal?" Finally, Winge had discovered a very special and inexhaustible source of satisfaction with everything in the Swedish prison in the comparison which he made between his own experiences and what his friends and acquaintances had related of prison

life in his native country, which he of course, in order to emphasize the contrast, pictured to himself as a veritable hell upon earth. He repeatedly assured me that he would much rather remain ten or twenty years in prison in Sweden than five years or less at home, and he thanked his lucky star that he had committed his crime in Sweden. Sometimes he seemed not far from regarding this latter fact as a sure dispensation of Providence.

Meanwhile there was one feature of Winge's life in confinement which contributed, perhaps even more than his transformation of the external realities of prison life, to the unbroken brightness and happiness of these first years of penal servitude, and that was religion. Under the influence of a number of well-disposed rather than especially intelligent persons, belonging to a religious association for visiting prisoners, Winge had become, a few weeks after his arrival in prison, a believing Christian. He repented of his crime and forswore his previous life of vice and debauchery. There is no reason whatever to doubt that he himself regarded his conversion to a new religion as perfectly honest and sincere. As a general rule it may be said that among criminals in prison, and especially among those under life-sentence, one practically never finds conscious religious hypocrisy, partly because what they may possibly gain by it in no wise compensates for the trouble of keeping up the pretence during years of unremitting control, partly because most felons quite naturally harbour a deep aversion to religion and its representatives, and consequently can only restrain themselves in their presence by a supreme effort of self-control. In order to find religious hypocrisy at all one must seek it among broken-down liberated prisoners who appeal to the charity of religious associations when in search of work, and even among them it is comparatively rare. But just as surely as Winge was not hypocritical, equally surely was religion in his hands only a new means of cheating reality and of making life as comfortable as possible for the time being.

It would, indeed, be not only very extraordinary, but even psychologically quite inconceivable to find among criminals, and especially among the worst felons, the strength for real, genuine, sound religious life. • Of course it is not possible here to survey all the attempts that have been made to define the genuine religious state, which indeed never can be expressed in words. But however different these definitions may appear to be, yet in reality they all agree in this : that it is essential to religious life to have confidence in one Being and to submit to something higher than ourselves. Whether our conception of religion be that the superhuman power can be the only supreme power of the universe, or whether it be of human forces and ideals, such as country, art or science, yet the essence of all religion is evidently the capacity for faithful devotion. But quite apart from all criminological theories it is as clear as day that that is just what criminals completely lack. In fact, among all the religious criminals I have had an opportunity of studying there was not one whose religion I could call sound and genuine. Certainly I found among some a kind of religiosity which undoubtedly appeared genuine in so far as it manifestly proceeded from a vague seeking for community with something or other outside and above themselves. But the essence of this desire was in reality nothing else but a boundless need for support, in the literal sense of the word ; and the result of it, if it at all deserves the name religion, certainly cannot be called genuine. It grew up out of psychological disintegration, in confinement, among degenerates. It began with inarticulate, agonized prayers to the powers of Heaven or Hell, no matter which, in which the suppliant did not believe, and it broke out the moment these prayers were answered, as it were, from the void beyond. Then out of their distress they evolved some weird protector, who became henceforth their secret god. Often this cell religiosity vanished when the prisoner was removed to the common prison, but sometimes it assumed real control of their psychic life and

developed into wonderful dogmas, which could be made to harmonize, by great straining, with Biblical teaching. Possibly among the most backward human races one might find religious phenomena of a similar or related kind. I also encountered in prison other religious conceptions which strongly reminded me of the religions of primitive peoples and which also at first sight certainly appeared genuine, in so far as they involved abnegation to a higher power. I refer especially to a form of religion which I found among various old prisoners under life sentence, who, at the bottom of their hearts, had certainly not ceased to hope for pardon and a happy old age, but who found it safer to make up their accounts of their life on earth and to place their hopes for the future in another life. These criminals had become convinced during many years of penal servitude that the power which had intervened in their fate, and the law, the courts, the police and the prisons at its disposal, really were stronger than they, and, since their own life was regulated at every moment by this power, it had naturally become in their instinctive conceptions the ruler of existence. In proportion as they grew accustomed to obey its orders, without thought of resistance, it had become more and more dissociated from external force and appeared as a more non-terrestrial mystic reality which naturally soon became personified as a god. In a god of such origin one cannot expect anything else but harsh qualities. These criminals grown grey in prison were naturally, by reason of their own experience and their personal instincts, incapable of conceiving him as anything else but the god of power, vengeance and retribution. But just for this reason this all-powerful god had one weakness : he strove with his whole being for recognition by man. And owing to this weakness it was possible to bargain with him : in exchange for recognition he sold his protection on earth, and for worship he sold all the glories of heaven. He cared nothing for the actions of his followers ; man can just as little win eternal bliss by good deeds as a life prisoner

can gain a pardon by good behaviour. Still less did he concern himself with the mind of the faithful, he demanded nothing more than outward submission, and he spared no weapon against those who denied him. For a religion of this character one can doubtless find support in episodes and laws of the Old Testament, probably originating in earlier periods of Jewish history than those in which they were committed to writing, and something of this spirit must have been present in the religions of all peoples in the earlier stages of their development. But it must also be quite clear that in this submission, for which these criminals imagined they could buy their god's protection on earth and everlasting joy in heaven, there was not the least shadow of unselfish devotion. On the contrary, the whole of this conception was manifestly nothing but an excrescence of the crudest imaginable of all selfish pre-occupations, that of the completely helpless and the completely unfit for themselves. And this was true not only of all the prison religions which showed any relationship to primitive forms of religion, but also of the religion which was beyond comparison the commonest in the prison. From a purely formal point of view this was simply the religion of the established Swedish Church, but in reality it depended, as happens with all other human beings, upon what each individual sought for and found it. And that, with the majority of these converts, may be described as the sense of guiltlessness without change of heart. It was almost exclusively during solitary confinement and among first offenders and prisoners under life-sentence that these conversions occurred in prison, and among these criminals I found before conversion such complete prostration that at first I involuntarily believed its source to be remorse or a sense of guilt in the moral sense, i.e., unselfish suffering in the consciousness of the crime committed. When I saw these tortured souls seeking consolation in religion it seemed obvious to me that they sought strength to overcome and destroy the passions which had made them criminals. But unhappily it was



impossible to abide by this assumption. After a few interviews it became apparent that their remorse was only chagrin at the consequences of their crime, or unconscious fear of new and severe punishment for new crimes. This appeared from the fact that none of these criminals, despite their distress, ever gave a thought to his victims; they were concerned exclusively with their own weal or woe. And what they sought in religion was not strength for purification and reconciliation, but merely a means of shifting blame from themselves. In this in fact they succeeded, however strange it may seem, by a sort of formal acceptance or, as it were, mental recognition of the religious creed. Just because they lacked every foundation of real religious life they could persuade themselves, or rather they never doubted, that religious conversion consisted merely in such a formal transition from denial to confession. And their conversion made them in their own esteem new beings, in the literal sense of the word, i.e., it freed them from responsibility for their crimes and criminal passions; it freed them from all sense of responsibility both as to the past and the future, and, since it was unable to free them from the punishment imposed, it necessarily made of them martyrs who suffered for others' crimes, but who would be more richly rewarded in Heaven. There was in fact no limit to the self-glorification of these criminals after conversion. But just as they appeared pitiful in their distress and prostration during the first period of solitary confinement, the more repulsive, even loathsome, did they appear in their apparent humility and imperturbable self-satisfaction, which was of course charged with the bitterest reproaches on everything and everybody in their vicinity, and it need scarcely be said that there was not the faintest suspicion of unselfish longing in their religion.

However, in the majority of the criminals who thus turned to it, religion constituted an imperfect and uncertain source of peace in prison. It certainly helped them through many of the worst hours and days of distress, and it doubt-

less also, as a general rule, helped to make their solitary confinement less burdensome. But it never gave them full security, for the simple reason that they could never abandon themselves entirely to their delusion. In the case of Winge and of all the others in whom self-deception was the most characteristic quality, it was developed into a complete apparatus for destroying reality and for opening up sunlit paths in the imagination to everything their hearts desired. Even during solitary confinement religion was not really necessary for these criminals. They were not tortured by remorse, even in the sense of chagrin, at the crimes for which they were now paying the penalty. On the whole they were quite contented with their lot in prison and they had neither conscious nor unconscious fear lest in the future, after they had been pardoned, they should commit new crimes with more painful consequences. And yet there was one thing which, during their penal servitude, it seemed impossible for them to escape: the fact that they were under life-sentence. For all such the consciousness of the length and uncertainty of the punishment was naturally from the very beginning the hardest part of the punishment. It is true that pardon is usually granted after 20-25 years, varying primarily with the nature of the crime and also with the conduct of the prisoner. But since uncertainty is harder to bear than any positive suffering or misfortune, it is evident that thirty years' imprisonment without the hope of commutation is less hard to bear than life imprisonment with the probability of pardon after twenty years. In this respect Winge had obtained, almost immediately after the life-sentence was pronounced, the certainty he required for a calm and happy life. Winge himself asserted that one of the persons who used to visit him during his first months in prison, and who had been his religious guide, had assured him that he had every reason to hope for pardon after six or eight years. But it is much more probable that Winge had extracted from some purely friendly and warming advice, e.g., not to

despair, but to trust in the inexhaustible mercy of God, what he most desired to occur in respect of the term of his punishment, i.e., on the part of the worldly authorities. When I considered it my duty in this as in all other matters to enlighten Winge as to the true state of affairs, it appeared that his faith had already assumed something of a purely religious nature. He had—of course not consciously or logically, but certainly unconsciously and psychologically—after a few years come to regard pardon as the inevitable consequence of his conversion; he knew that he would be the unique exception, but he felt himself by his new religion far above the rules applying to ordinary prisoners, and he refused to be shaken for a single moment in his faith. Of course he could give no reason for his faith, he therefore simply avoided replying to my representations and sought instead as far as possible to lead the conversation into other channels. But if Winge strictly speaking only needed religion for one particular purpose in prison, yet it was nevertheless very useful, partly to free himself from certain vague self-reproaches which might arise within him during solitary confinement, and partly—most important of all—to open up entirely new, brilliant and happy visions of the future. Of course Winge did not reproach himself with the embezzlement or the robbery and murder which he had committed. Like all other criminals he spoke of his crime as of something quite inevitable under the circumstances, or which no sensible person would ever dream of regretting, just as a stone falls to earth if nothing holds it up. Nor did he reproach himself for his debauched life, even though this was evidently the most direct and palpable cause of his crime (of which more later). What he reproached himself with was that he had not kept his debauchery on a social plane where, in his view, he might have continued it to the end of his life without any unpleasant consequences.

Like so many other criminals, Winge imagined the life of the non-labouring classes as passed in idleness and more or less crude sensual pleasures, because, of course, to him

nothing else seemed worth striving for. Naturally Winge did not consciously clear his mind as to the real nature of these self-reproaches ; he was on the contrary convinced that he was condemning all debauchery whatever. But whether he spoke of his past life or of his future plans, his own ardent desires shone too clearly through the newly-learned sombre religious words for there to be any mistake as to what was real and personal and what was newly-borrowed property. What Winge wished to escape by religion, and what, after conversion, he felt himself indeed free from, was, in the first place, the fear of sinking into the scum of large cities, whose orgies, with or without robbery or murder, always ended in prison. He certainly had no fear of the orgies themselves. But it was also from everything coarse, brutal and filthy in the proletariat or the working-classes that he sought and found relief in religion. In the depths of his heart he felt that one who had received the grace of conversion and had been admitted among the chosen of God no longer had anything in common with, and never could be dragged down to, the purposeless bestial life of the working-classes. And after this deliverance, which Winge called his salvation, the whole of God's Kingdom lay open to him in a manner he had never dreamed of. Moreover, since religion had at last raised him above all that he had hated and loathed since childhood in the poor bourgeois home, where they slaved from morning till night, nothing remained unattainable to him. He saw himself already, just by reason of his strong and glowing religion, respected by all as a financial magnate in some great city, surrounded by all that money can buy. Finally his religious prison dreams dissolved in vague and hazy visions of pleasure, but also in infinite, agreeable gratitude to the God who thus endowed him.

Removal to the common prison after three years of solitary confinement was naturally in the case of most prisoners (except the recidivists) of profound psychological significance. To Winge and his kind it was simply revolutionary,

for the various illusions which were the essential elements of his life in solitude, could not bear contact with the reality presented by fellow-prisoners at work. Their self-deception was therefore driven into new paths, and often they built up a completely new system from the very foundations. After less than a month every trace of religion had been swept out of Winge's life and it was replaced by a raging fury against everything in the nature of religion. This in turn faded away into a superior contempt, and finally into indifference. The immediate occasion of this change in Winge was his inability to escape the conviction that he had no better chance than anybody else of being pardoned before the lapse of the usual 20-25 years. Just as it was on this point that he first enlisted the services of religion, so also it was at this point that his religion first received a mortal blow. He had coupled his conversion too firmly to his faith in an exceptionally early pardon for it to subsist after he lost that faith. But neither could he in the realistic discussions with his fellow prisoners on prison life and future possibilities sustain his dream that religion had raised him to a privileged position above not only their, but also all honest workers', wretched workaday worries.

Religion ceased to be of use to him, and lost all *raison d'être* in his life. His wild fury when confronted with an entirely new outlook for the future was directed, as has been said, against religion in general, but more especially against the person who had lured him on to the wrong path, and he soon succeeded in convincing himself that the latter had deliberately cheated him not only of pardon, but also of future support for his great business ventures. He had done so through the religious association to which he belonged, and of course only in order to be able to boast of having converted the famous murderer Winge. Naturally he never revealed this fury to me, nor did he openly fling out his reproaches, but nevertheless he was quite incapable of concealing them. Another cause of the rapid disappearance of Winge's religiosity was that his whole earlier personality

naturally awoke in association with those of his own character by whom he was now surrounded. To enter one of the common workrooms of the prison was almost the same thing as to enter one of the pothouses which had been his home since he was fifteen years of age and in which he had always felt himself so much at home and so perfectly happy because of the company he found there. Within a short space of time he learned the life history of his fellow prisoners, and he had certainly no need to be reticent himself. Among them he found complete understanding and sympathy; he could be quite himself from morn till night, just as in the old days in the pothouses, and now he once again belonged to a community of living human beings. In spite of all, the new life was in the long run more attractive than the solitude of the religious uplift, for religion had been to Winge, as to most other criminals, only a second best support during solitary confinement. It was now mainly a question of adapting himself to present conditions, since the future had receded into remote uncertainty. Not even the liveliest dreams of what might happen twenty or thirty years hence could afford him any comfort. All the energy which he had expended in these dreams, and which had been necessary to keep his religion alive, was now concentrated on the glorification of prison life and in making of it as far as possible an ideal existence. And since he now had plenty of congenial company, which was the only thing he had lacked during solitary confinement, it was quite natural that he should be so completely successful that when after some months he described a day in prison, with its excellent food, regular walks, refreshing gymnastics, an hour's profound unbroken sleep after lunch, the excellent library, etc., it sounded for all the world like a description of a luxurious hydro for rest and recreation. As for the twenty-five years of penal servitude, they vanished as easily from his mind, after a short time, as they had been reduced during the religious phase to six or eight years. Since he could no longer deny them he simply ceased to think about them, and when I one day

referred to them in conversation it appeared that he had consoled himself with the reflection that he would only be forty-five years old when he was discharged and that the whole of life would still be open to him at that age.

From what has been said it will appear that Winge, when he spoke to me of his past life, had essentially different objects in view before and after his transfer to the common prison. Whether he accidentally referred to some particular episode, or whether he ranged in detail over whole periods, his purpose during the period of solitary confinement had always been to convince me, and at the same time to enjoy the knowledge, that he stood immeasurably above its profligacy and its crude debauch. To hear him speak of his past life during this period was like hearing him speak of a stranger deserving of the utmost contempt, though also of Christian compassion. Self-pity indeed is a state of mind to which almost all criminals, fortunate or unfortunate, tend in one way or another. As soon as religion had disappeared from his life it was on the other hand exclusively in order to advance explanatory or mitigating circumstances that he constantly referred to the past, with which he was now in full harmony, though not without an ample portion of milder self-pity. Nevertheless both as regards the main outlines and psychologically it was the same character which emerged from his accounts, during and after solitary confinement, of his past life, for the simple reason that he was always incapable of concealing its real driving forces. His ever vivid satisfaction in all his sensuous recollections shone clearly, as has been said, through both his religious condemnation and his attempts to discover mitigating circumstances. It was in the end, however, in the latter that his psychological development appeared most completely. For he naturally could not advance in his own defence anything except what he was convinced that everybody else must condone, and in the conceptions which he thus attributed to others he inevitably revealed, in the long run, not only his own surface passions,

but also the root evil of his nature: there is generally, as has already been said, no surer path to the inmost nature of man than listening to what he regards as evident, of universal application and of the essence of human nature. But the fundamental defects in Winge's psychic life displayed in these attempts at self-justification were exactly the same as I had already become familiar with in his reaction to prison life. During the whole of his life, from the earliest years until the date of his crime, he had never been able to look the truth in the face if it was inconvenient, or, conversely, he had always and everywhere transformed reality to what at the moment he most desired.

With reference to the years before his embezzlement and flight from his native country, the particulars given in the reports of the trial must be supplemented by Winge's own statements in prison. According to them his pot-house life among prostitutes and criminal riff-raff had by no means begun—as one might suppose in view of his exemplary conduct in employment—just after his flight, but as early as the year he left home, i.e., before he was fifteen years old, and his embezzlement had not been his first crime. Winge gave precise details of the first years away from his parents' home in order to show how completely innocent he had been in falling originally into a way of life which sooner or later must lead to crime. Even on the evening of the day of his arrival in the town where he first took up his work he was conducted by two male assistants in the business—a book-keeper a few years older than himself and an errand boy of the same age—to a night restaurant where waitresses were employed who were in fact prostitutes. There he was immediately introduced to depraved circles from all classes of society; third-class variety artists, ex-clerks and shop assistants, well-dressed rogues and cheats living on the earnings of prostitution, most of them convicted, and all beyond the law. These, and prostitutes, were henceforth to be his only society. When Winge painted the gay life in these circles in colours which he sought, to the best of his



ability, to tone down, he did not make-believe that in his innocence he did not understand what was going on around him. His primary thesis in his defence was simply: "Who on earth could have resisted such a life as that?" In order to make its allurements even more clear to me, he described the increasing monotony, the grey tedium of his everyday life as a child at home. True, there had never been any actual want, and everything was clean and proper, but he had been positively ill with a desire to escape as he watched his father at work from morn till night, all the year round, except for a few miserable weeks in the summer, and his mother constantly busy with the children or household matters. It appeared that the dreams he dreamed of the great world as a child at home were realized the first day in these circles, where there was no burden of labour and everybody lived only to make a brilliant festival of each new day. Later, indeed, his ambitions grew, and he came to regard more sceptically and with a superior air the life of these petty swindlers, always in fear of the police. But if the thousand allurements of this glittering life of pleasure were Winge's first line of defence, the second and more important line was that at first, and for a long time after, he was never guilty of any blameworthy action whilst he shared, as a novice, the life of his older companions. Indeed Winge was not without the natural foundations of moral instincts, nor did he lack positive living moral instincts, implanted and developed in childhood. On the contrary, he was from the beginning by no means morally insensitive, and he had inherited from his simple childhood home, with its strict routine, not only dreams of freedom from all duties, but also quite a considerable sense of duty. But what he lacked was the capacity of envisaging reality as anything else but what seemed to him most convenient for the moment. And in everything which he now related with such glowing enthusiasm in order to convince me that at least during the first half-year of his sojourn in the strange city he had never committed any reprehensible act,

there was yet present, almost as vivid as when he was called upon to take decisive action, the process of self-deception, instead of a conflict of motives, before he could with an easy conscience throw in his lot with all these prostitutes, procurers and swindlers. What had he really to reproach himself with? He lived honestly on his hard-earned wages and carried out his duties irreproachably, as anyone would testify. Had he not also the right to enjoy life a little, when he did so with his own money? If he had needed to use a penny of anybody else's money he would never have set foot in the place again. It is true that he had occasionally been compelled to ask his parents for a little extra pocket money and in the end he had sometimes pressed them hard, for which he was sorry. But if they had known the circumstances, and how others lived in the town, they would certainly not have thought him extravagant. At any rate his mother did not grudge him any happiness he could procure while he was young. Of course she would not have approved everything he did. But could old people ever fully understand young people? Everything was so different nowadays. Moreover, he himself would have much preferred things otherwise, both among his friends and at the girls' homes. But he could not change the world and he must take it as it came. He could not withdraw from the world and live the life of a hermit. It would have spoiled his future, from which his parents hoped so much. He needed his comrades and friends in order to get on in the world. Was it not his duty, therefore, both to himself and to his parents, to share their lives, even if there was much in them that repelled him? Thanks to these and other arguments he succeeded at fifteen years of age in living with a perfectly easy conscience as a regular guest at brothels and with others who lived on prostitution.

Meanwhile Winge could not in the long run afford, out of his earnings in the business where he was employed, the way of life into which he had fallen. After he had extracted everything possible from his parents, exhausted his

credit in the pot-houses, borrowed all he could from friends and strangers who entered his circle, and occasionally replenished his funds from sources in which money flowed freely, there came a day when he must either make up his mind to abandon his life in bars and brothels or else have recourse to illegal means of supporting himself. During my visits to Winge in the common prison, he repeatedly returned to this point in his career, and it was with very special zeal that he sought to explain to me why he had acted as he did just at this moment. He felt instinctively that his fate had been decided at this point and he was naturally most anxious to persuade himself and me that he had been quite blameless. At this time he was already quite familiar with a constantly accessible and, as experience had shown him, perfectly safe source of additional income. The business in which he was employed was a large wholesale house with which there was connected a small shop. This shop was managed by him and his two friends, in addition to their ordinary work. The head of the firm exercised very loose control, as he was travelling most of the year on the business of the firm. Winge's two friends, as soon as they were satisfied as to his reliability, confided to him that for many years past they had sold purloined goods to so-called "clothes-Jews" and that no shadow of suspicion had ever fallen upon them. Winge, however, did not in any way attempt to represent himself as an innocent victim of the temptation and depraving influences of his two senior companions. Like all self-satisfied criminals he never had the habit of putting blame on others. He merely wished to convince me that, just as his participation in the festive life of his companions, so also here, his action was quite defensible, and that in the circumstances, no sensible person could have acted otherwise. At this point I should mention that in so far as he was now dealing with indisputably criminal, as distinct from immoral, actions Winge passed, in form, from defence to an endeavour to explain and excuse. His expressions became more indefinite

and solicitous. He no longer made positive assertions, but sought, as it were, my approval, and he often suppressed what was already on his lips, all, of course, in order to maintain the appearance of fully appreciating the turpitude of his criminal acts. In substance, however, nothing was changed thereby; he evidently remained just as fully convinced of the justice of his actions. It also appeared at this point that restraining influences were not lacking in him. Among them was certainly not the fear of discovery and punishment, a fact which should be mentioned in order to prevent misunderstanding. Like all self-deceivers, Winge could not take into account the possibility of discovery, any more than most other criminals, and therefore the fear of punishment could never present itself to him. To what extent his self-deception could blind him in the face of circumstances which rendered his arrest within six hours of the crime almost a mathematical certainty I shall show later in my account of his psychology at the time of the crime. But now, when for the first time in his life he was about to transgress the law, what rose up within him with accumulated force was whatever had developed from the natural moral foundations of his childhood into a horror of crime as such. And that this force was by no means as inconsiderable as might afterwards have appeared is evident from the fact that he resisted as long as he did. But however deeply his moral instincts had already been undermined by his fast life in pot-houses and brothels and among criminals and potential criminals, yet in the end his self-deception overcame every obstacle to the continuation of his life of pleasure. In the first place he derived incomparably greater support than formerly from the two arguments: everybody else does the same, and, it is necessary to my future that I should not isolate myself entirely. There was in fact among all his acquaintances scarcely one who was not guilty of much graver misdeeds than the insignificant peculations here in question. Why should he be the only one to be held back by all sorts of possible and impossible laws, and what would

become of him if he now cut himself off from the rest of the world? Nobody would raise a finger to support him and help him. He would simply have to slave away as a junior book-keeper as long as he lived. And that would break his parents' hearts. Had he not been their dearest hope since earliest childhood, and even to-day did they not think everything possible for him? And as for the old saying that virtue is its own reward, did not every sensible person know that it was just Sunday-school prattle? In real life things were different. Almost every single one of the richest men in the town who had made his way had begun by appropriating the petty cash. But in addition to this, the more he reflected on the subject the less he could believe that he had really injured anybody by taking these small extra sums. The trifles which he concealed meant less than nothing to the proprietor, who did not bother himself at all about the shop. Winge even wondered in his secret heart if the proprietor would not even have bestowed his blessing on these petty thefts, if it had been possible. He was not really mean, but a gay and cheerful gentleman who enjoyed himself and liked to see others enjoy themselves, too. And if these peculations should continue until they amounted to any considerable sum, he could always repay some day in the future, for Winge was as certain that he would one day be rich as that he lived and moved. Had he then the right to deprive himself of the joys of youth and block every road to success just for the sake of some law or other, which perhaps did not even cover this case? As I have already remarked, Winge did not advance all these arguments openly and directly, but in groping and appealing attempts to excuse his action. But in whatever he said the thoughts at the back of his mind were clearly visible, and it was easy to supply what he left unsaid.

For some psychological reason of no particular importance Winge left his first position after a couple of years and his next employment afforded no such opportunities of acquiring extra income as have been described above. Meanwhile,

however, he had discovered a source of income equally plentiful ; that of living on the earnings of prostitution. Since this was not, in Winge's view, a punishable offence, he spoke of it with naïve candour, at first merely to explain how he had been able to continue his expensive life so long. My endeavours to open his eyes, at least to some extent, to the real significance of such a life were met by a detailed account of how it happened. Neither he nor anybody else, except possibly some jealous or envious persons, had ever seen anything wrong in it. It had begun, of course, gradually and imperceptibly on both sides by his borrowing, when penniless, from the girl he was with just enough to pay for their theatre tickets, supper, etc. At that time he still felt it embarrassing to accept money from girls, he could not remember why, probably some old prejudice from home, and for a long time he paid back every penny of these loans. But later on he had said that creatures of that sort were not really worth so much consideration and circumstance. It was really only fair that sometimes they should pay their share—and his too—since they had been able for so long to squeeze him as they had done, thanks to his stupidity, and it was they who had brought him to the brink of ruin. And they had never complained. On the contrary they vied with each other to offer him money, and finally they had fought for him. In the whole town there had never been a man so sought after as he. Then, indeed, matters did not stop at payment for visits to variety theatres or in restaurants ; he borrowed what he required for other purposes also. And sometimes perhaps he had behaved a little harshly to those who were unwilling to pay up. But was not that his right, since they had cost him so much ? Moreover he rendered them every day very great services, and devoted more time and energy to them than they could ever repay. They could not get along alone, either with the police or with their clients, especially with the cads who wished to batten on them and had no other livelihood. He had saved many a girl from the clutches of such rascals. Was he to leave

them to their fate and let them go under simply because his wages were not sufficient for him to live with them? Was it not rather his duty to help them when there was no other to whom they could turn? Even if Winge in prison now understood that in my eyes his living on the earnings of prostitution was morally just as repulsive as any other of his crimes, and he consequently began by degrees to express himself less frankly, it was still quite clear to me that in the end he felt that he had played a noble part as the self-sacrificing protector of these prostitutes. At the age of seventeen or eighteen, in addition to being a regular visitor at brothels, and a thief, he had begun to live on the earnings of prostitution with a completely good conscience, thanks to his boundless capacity for self-deception.

It must of course excite our surprise, as has been said, that Winge could continue such a life of daily orgies for as long as five years and yet attend to his duties in various offices to the full satisfaction of his employers. The explanation is to be found, apart from his extraordinary tough constitution, which was also the primary condition of his well-being in prison, in the fact that during all these years he was fired by dreams of splendid future successes. Every time he changed his employment—and he changed, as we have seen, not less than ten times between the ages of fifteen and twenty—he was convinced that the great deliverance and the great fortune were now at hand. Now at last, by virtue of his unique capacity, he would be taken into partnership in a few years, would marry millions, found banks and new industries, all of which would yield him an income sufficient to buy all the world's pleasures. In prison Winge remembered but few of these dreams, but from his occasional references to his youthful ambitions it was not difficult to imagine their general tendency and their ability to sustain him for shorter periods of time. When after a few months, or even weeks, his dreams faded away before realities which refused to conform to them, he began to look out for a new post, and when there was one in prospect

there grew up in him a new and equally fiery ambition. Winge's psychic life was in this respect extraordinarily typical not only of the special group of murderers here under consideration, but also of innumerable other youthful offenders. If it were possible to bring to light the more or less conscious dreams of the future in the brains of some hundreds of young criminals they would afford a more grotesquely fantastic caricature of real human ambitions than could ever be obtained in any other way. But if Winge's energy during these years was constantly fanned into flame by his dreams, in spite of all his wild orgies, yet such a life naturally rapidly undermined not only his moral instincts, but also his bodily and spiritual strength. And in this growing psycho-physical decay there was soon nothing else stable and essential than a vague and boundless ambition. Also from this point of view Winge's psychic life was of great interest to the criminal psychologist. For out of this ambition, which evidently had its origin in increasing waste of strength, there grew up in turn ardent, undisciplined passions of the kind which one so often finds in criminals, and which at first sight one is tempted to regard as an excess of elementary living forces. What hovered before the mind of Winge at this time was on the one hand gigantic business undertakings, which he never defined more clearly, in order to avoid the necessity of seeing how impossible they were, and on the other hand festive orgies, which he also obviously regarded as a well-deserved relaxation from his extraordinarily heavy work. But experience had convinced him that neither the one nor the other could ever be achieved in his then sphere of life. He had for long been sick to death both of the endless monotony of his life among prostitutes and of constant dreams of success in all sorts of stupid offices. At last his eyes were opened to the fact that he had led an unworthy hole-and-corner life and that his best strength had been smothered by petty scruples or had run to waste among the scum of back streets. He now clearly realized that it was not his



fault that he had not advanced at all after five years. He had not lacked sufficient strength of purpose; he had, God knows, been filled with burning ambitions. All the more certainly he knew that he would be able to make his way in the great world outside. In any capital in the world he would find just the conditions for which he was destined. When he thought of London, Paris, Berlin, New York and of all his more fortunate older friends had told him of their wonderful life in fabulous golden restaurants, vast variety theatres, luxurious establishments filled with hundreds of women from all parts of the world, he trembled with fury that he should have allowed himself to be held captive in such a miserable hole as this for five of the best years of his life, nay, for the whole of his youth, which might have been surfeited with splendour. For it was just to the great world outside that he had longed to journey, and to which he certainly would have journeyed at fifteen years of age, if he had been able to decide for himself. He might have forgiven his parents and others who had held him fast in the misery and filth at home the loss of the joys of youth during those years, but he could never forgive them the loss of work and opportunity. As compared with work and success the splendid restaurants and everything belonging to them were completely indifferent to him. It was for wealth—boundless wealth, for which everything could be bought—and universal honour and esteem for which in the bottom of his heart he always longed; for which he would have worked unremittingly and indefatigably from beginning to end, if he could only have escaped into the great world. All other things he desired only as a rest from work in order to gather ever new strength to continue. But he was not the sort of man to be embittered by opposition. He still retained the will to work and his joy in life and all sorts of possibilities still awaited him out there. But now every day's delay was a sin; now he could no longer allow himself to be held back by petty considerations; now he must break away at any price. Thus his passion for travel grew from day to day and finally

it grew so great that it really seemed strong enough to surmount all obstacles. But it must be clear from what has been said that this passion was born and nourished by his waste of energy and his consequent increasing inability to face reality. The apparent strength of his passion was therefore only weakness. It was clear to Winge from the beginning that he could only obtain the capital he needed to begin his new life by means of some great coup. Perhaps in some moment of special dream intoxication, when he imagined himself possessed of extraordinary powers, he had thought of saving up for some years the necessary means from his ordinary earnings, but if so, the thought had vanished without leaving any traces on his memory. And judging by all that had happened in his life up to this point it seemed to me abundantly clear that there no longer existed any restraining influences in him. In reality, however, it appears that he shrank more from the new crime than from any of the earlier ones, obviously because it was no longer a question of petty thefts from the shop, of a crime which could be concealed or minimized, or positively dismissed from consciousness, but of a crime by which he would be cut off from society and which therefore was indelibly stamped as a crime. Confrontation with this fact shook up from the depths of his nature all that remained of the horror of crime which, as has been said, developed in him in childhood out of his natural moral instincts. It should be mentioned, too, that he counted now, perhaps even less than in the case of his thefts, on the possibility of arrest, since he was leaving his country. Consequently there was not the least shadow of fear of punishment, and all thoughts of the material discomforts of flight were simply driven out of his mind. But these restraining influences were quite incapable, in the long run, of resisting the longing, daily renewed, which had taken such deep roots in his nature. Naturally, too, he succeeded in finding a thousand new arguments to persuade himself, just as in the case of his thefts and his living on the earnings

of prostitution, that he was not only fully justified, but that it was his duty to the future which awaited him abroad, to procure by any means possible the money he required. When he returned one day and showered gold upon his parents and his friends and his native city, of course after having repaid the miserable sum now in question, nobody would dream of reproaching him. On the contrary everybody would hail him because when young he had not been so cowardly as to shrink from danger, etc. When a suitable opportunity presented itself, and a letter containing 10,000 crowns was entrusted to him, he was therefore fully prepared to seize it.

After his embezzlement and flight from his native land the *tempo* of Winge's life naturally quickened as he hastened towards the final catastrophe. The two months he spent flitting about Europe before his arrival in Sweden were in certain respects of extraordinary importance in his fateful development, especially owing to the fact that he grew accustomed to regard himself as a criminal. I have already elsewhere expressed the opinion that the psychological significance of the first offence can scarcely be exaggerated because it constitutes a breach in the defences of those moral instincts which it has required thousands of years and terrible sufferings in the history of the human race to build up as a psychic reality in the breast of every human being.\* It may here be added that when the criminal escapes arrest, there usually occurs shortly after the first crime a clearance of the ruins of the former moral instincts because, so long as he enjoys the fruits of his crime or merely avoids its social consequences, he must constantly endeavour to free himself from what remains of these instincts, which now show themselves, it is true, as broken-down and powerless but nevertheless as embarrassing and gnawing reproaches. Winge himself had of course no consciousness of this process of decay, but it was easy to confirm its influence by observing in his accounts of his

\* Contributions to the Psychology of Theft. Sthlm, 1907. pp. 36 ff.

life his various instinctive reactions to ordinary human relations before and after those two months. It ought perhaps in this connection to be expressly mentioned that if the embezzlement became of such moment in Winge's life, in spite of the fact that he had already committed other crimes, it was because this was the first crime which he acknowledged to himself as such: he had been able to dismiss from his mind the criminal nature of his earlier petty thefts. For the rest, Winge's life during this period, in spite of his travels, was psychologically an unbroken continuation of his life during the preceding years at home. Just as little as any of the other travelled criminals I have met did Winge retain from London, Paris and Rome or anywhere else the least trace of any memory which he might not equally well have gathered in the night haunts of the back streets of his native town. Nothing had changed by his leaving them. It is worth mentioning, however, that Winge's travels and those of his fellows up and down Europe were not at all determined by the fear of pursuit or indeed by any reasonable motives whatever. Like the similar wanderings of innumerable other criminals, they were just another manifestation of the purposeless longing to which I have already referred. It is of the nature of this longing that it can only be satisfied in some new place, and every unknown place is a new enticement. When I once asked Winge why they travelled through Paris to Italy and then returned after a few days' stay in Rome, he could only answer that they wanted to see Rome, but did not like it. Sometimes they imagined special reasons for their journeys, but these reasons, by nature of their foolishness, only constituted fresh evidence of their purposelessness. Thus, for example, as Winge explained at the trial, they had actually travelled from London to Sweden with no other object than that of living more cheaply, whilst awaiting an engagement in England. But meantime Winge in no wise abandoned his great plans for the future. On the contrary, he had never been so confident of their success as now,

when the first step had been so easy and so successful. Nobody had thought of searching for him in Paris or in Rome and he moved about almost as freely as if he were travelling under his own name. But he must first familiarize himself with the new conditions and study foreign life thoroughly so that later on, when he really got to work, he should not be cheated by the adventurers and rogues of which all capitals are full. This was his first duty and he devoted himself to it with all his energy. There was no doubt, however, that after his return to Paris he accepted Valgeviski's proposal to go on the variety stage in order to have employment—of course only as a start, in order to secure a firm foothold somewhere. It would of course be useful to have worked himself on the stage if he should decide later on to become a theatre proprietor or the owner of some establishment for amusements, with a restaurant, café, concert-hall and other attractions, or perhaps a great hotel. He felt himself created for such a life. This was the height of his ambition : both boundless pleasure and unlimited wealth. It was also a dispensation of Providence that he had made the acquaintance of a Valgeviski, who had years of experience and connections in all parts of the world, who knew all the great artists and managers personally, and who could obtain for him an appointment at any of the largest theatres in the world. And Valgeviski had apparently attached himself to Winge in a very special manner, which Winge thought was sometimes a little intimate when he kissed and caressed him. However, that only showed how reliable he was. He could therefore safely invest his capital with Valgeviski, and thanks to him the great world lay open before him. For Winge transformed to his own liking the men of his circle as well as the rest of the external world, whenever it suited his momentary need. Since he was now beyond doubt a part of the great capitals of the world but could not alone do anything else but drift about among cafés until his money was exhausted, he required somebody who could and would realize for him

all his dreams. And when Valgevski adopted him for the sake of his money, and probably also of his youth, he imagined he had found the right man to do it. But this of course was a new dream of the same origin as all the previous dreams whenever he changed his occupation at home.

Between Winge's arrival in Sweden and the robbery and murder about three months elapsed. Concerning this period the evidence of the depositions and reports of the trial must be supplemented by his own statements in prison. The picture of increasing difficulties and need, ending in complete destitution, which was given at the trial, corresponded in reality to the last six or seven weeks only. During the first months Winge had lived, thanks to his connections with prostitutes, in anything but need. Valgevski, who had lived in Sweden and consequently had numerous old friends among third-class professionals on the variety stage, had immediately introduced and recommended Winge to one of the still surviving brothels, and he had been accepted the same evening by one of the inmates, a certain Sonja, as her official protector. Such connections are usually entered into at the first meeting as the result of some sudden and accidental impulse, and they are later dissolved for the same reason. They are especially characteristic during the whole of their existence of that complete absence of any systematic conduct or any sincere personal motive which marks the life of low class criminals and frequently makes them appear, not as individuals in the ordinary sense of the word, but as a conglomerate, shifting and drifting haphazard. According to Winge's account, everything fell out excellently. Winge's landlady had given him a real home where he lacked nothing, but was able rather to derive a substantial income from night-clients. He was respected by all, and Sonja herself gave him at least ten to twenty crowns a day, sufficient at that time for a care-free life. When he lay ill she sent to him every day a bottle of champagne or fine old cognac.

Just as later in prison, so also now he considered himself fortunate in having come to Sweden, though for the sake of the future he had decided that they should go to Berlin, and both of them were filled with the liveliest hopes. He was sure that nobody in Berlin could compare with Sonja, and together with her he would surely be able at last to get on in the world to a position worthy of him. He had now become aware that Valgevski was associating with young boys and that he was therefore not to be relied upon, and now, grown wise by experience, he resolved to build on firmer foundations. Sonja, who had never been abroad, was as pleased as a child at their forthcoming honeymoon, and all the wonders which awaited her. But suddenly the whole thing collapsed in a quarrel in a large company at Sonja's home, and before they could collect themselves Sonja drove him out and flung in his face that she never wanted to see him again, even though that very morning they had been out to buy rings in order that they might appear as married in Berlin. The quarrel had begun by Sonja making fun of Winge's bad Swedish. He could not tolerate this in the presence of others, for it was an insult to his country. But when he forbade her she had become furious and told him that he had no authority over her, that she kept him, etc. This was the grossest lie imaginable, as Valgevski owed him money. He had therefore told her what she really was, and since then they had never seen each other. Afterwards she decried him to her friends, and he had been too proud to defend himself to such riff-raff, and had therefore been left entirely alone in Sweden. All this, of course, he had no opportunity of stating in court, although it would have helped him much more than the plea of need, which his counsel advanced as the only mitigating circumstance. Winge, like all other first offenders, was convinced in his heart that if he had had an opportunity to develop and explain everything he had to say in his own defence during the trial, he would, even if not declared not guilty, have received quite a different

sentence. What he wanted to prove now in prison was that he had been pursued by fate till the end. If Sonja had not laughed at him that night the murder would never have been committed, but he would have travelled to Berlin and would have been a rich man by now. But could any self-respecting man have acted differently? Or was he to allow his language and his country to be scoffed at before strangers, and by such filth as Sonja's friends? So where was his guilt? He knew that throughout all the changes of his life he had always obeyed the laws of honour. Therefore his conscience was easy and he could lead a happy and fortunate life even in prison.

After Valgevski's departure from Sweden and his breach with Sonja real need entered into Winge's and his confederate's life. They of course had no savings from the days of prosperity and they never dreamed of looking for work, since they lived under assumed names and could not produce their papers. Still less could they turn to their own Consulate for the means to return home. Sometimes they persuaded the chambermaid to bring a little food to their room or to beg for some remains in the kitchen. Sometimes they might meet some early acquaintance from a small variety theatre who would offer them a meal, but apart from these shifts they lived by pawning everything not absolutely indispensable. They slept the greater part of the day and slipped out towards evening to buy bread and milk at the nearest shop or to lounge about the streets without any purpose, until, a couple of hours later, they went to bed. One finds in criminals an abnormal capacity for sleeping sixteen, eighteen or even twenty hours a day for long periods, unless there is something to keep them moving, and this of course is one of the many symptoms of their general slackness. During this period Winge had scarcely any connected visions of the future. Instead he lived in the constant expectation of something turning up which would change instantly his whole manner of life. A telegram would arrive to say that his father had died



and left him a fortune. He need only return home to take it up and pay off all his debts and live independently ever after. Or one of the girls at home would find out his address and come over to persuade him to accompany her to America. Or one of Sonja's rich friends, who had heard how unjustly he had been treated, would seek him out and offer all the help he needed. Such vain fantasies are found in quite a large number of criminals of different psychological types just before their crime, even when they are not actually in bad straits. They afford an explanation why these criminals can exist for weeks and months in complete inactivity before the approaching catastrophe, and they are clearly a consequence of the final abandonment of all hope of facing reality unaided. In other words, such criminals have surrendered completely to self-deception. But these fancies discover themselves in different individuals, according to temperament, in most volatile moods, varying from joyous expectation to blank despair. Winge's mood during this period was in the main as evenly bright and happy as ever. One might with reason say of him that even his anguish was tinged with gladness. Consequently it cannot be said that the thought of murder grew up in him from desperation: on the contrary, he accepted the thought with a lively newborn enthusiasm when it cropped up out of his recollections of newspaper reports of murder and other crimes. It may be mentioned in this respect that it is under all circumstances psychologically foolish to say that a newspaper report has made a person criminal. Not even the most vivid accounts of sensational murders or other crimes can *give birth* to criminal instincts. But unsuitably written newspaper accounts may stimulate, focus and fortify such instincts where they already exist in a sufficiently advanced stage of development. They may therefore become collateral causes of a particular crime. It is psychologically worth noting that the mention of a criminal's doings in the press gives a certain appearance of justification in the eyes of criminals, doubtless owing to the general

and deep-rooted reverence among them for publicity or for the printed word as such. An exhaustive enquiry into the extent to which press publicity of crime may be regarded nowadays as an incentive would lead me too far afield, and still less can I pause to discuss how far other interests—e.g., the citizen's right to know what happens in his society—can compensate for the undoubtedly considerable harm which such publicity does. So far as Winge is concerned, the newspaper report of the murder of a postman can scarcely be regarded as of decisive moment. The idea of such a murder has arisen spontaneously wherever an organized postal service exists, and it still occurs to-day without the criminal knowing that a similar crime has been committed before. It is therefore impossible to decide whether Winge, if he had never read of such a case in the papers, would have selected this or some other criminal escape from the impossible position in which he then found himself placed, but it must be clear from what has been said that he did not turn murderer because of a newspaper report. The various restraining influences which at this moment still made him shrink from murder were naturally all of the very weakest. Least of all had fear of punishment any significance. Even if he had not lacked, by reason of his incurable blindness to every obstacle in his path, every capacity for reflecting upon the possibility of arrest after his crime, yet the fear of punishment would have had as little influence upon him as, in my opinion, upon any other murderer. It is a well-known psychological fact that when a person is on the point of committing an act of critical importance to his whole life, and is impelled by the deepest passions of his nature, everything else but the object of these passions is usually set aside and even the firmest, best-balanced, and, under ordinary circumstances, most conscientious mind becomes astonishingly blind or indifferent to everything except the immediate object in view. Such blindness, moreover, is in ordinary life by no means always a weakness. It is, on the contrary, often a

condition precedent to a concentration of energy. But in what action in life should these passions be more concentrated than in the case of murder? It is for that reason that in the behaviour of a murderer just before his crime one has the impression that he is walking in his sleep, without the least shadow of consciousness of the dangers to which he is exposing himself. In this respect the process in the case of Winge and Meyer was typical of that of a large number of other murderers. They murdered, in broad daylight in a room they had occupied for three months, in a large hotel in one of the busiest streets of the city, a man whom the hotel porter had shown up to their room and who by nature of his duties could not be expected to remain with them more than a few minutes. They had in fact made no other plans to reach safety than to take the first train and boat connection to northern Denmark. They had not even enquired on which days there were sailings. It was only because they discovered in a time table that there was no boat to Denmark that they suddenly decided to go to Russia. Usually the thought of punishment awakens at the moment when decisive passions have been neutralized by the execution of the crime, and it is usually followed by confused efforts to cover up the traces of the crime. Winge and Meyer took no other precautions for this purpose than to hastily force the body of their victim under the bed in their room. The above remarks apply of course principally to first offenders. Murder may, of course, under certain circumstances, for example after a war or a revolution, become a profession practised with the same calm as any other profession. But under normal conditions in civilized countries where the criminal law is enforced a person can never be sentenced twice in his life for murder. As regards moral influences, which Winge by no means lacked and which certainly caused him to shrink from earlier crimes, they were now so completely shattered and worn out that even if any traces of them remained it was easy for him by self-deception to liberate himself from their restraint.

Moreover, his faculty of self-deception had now developed into a power which irresistibly surmounted every obstacle in his path. In the first place he imagined that in Sweden, as in his own country, the postman carried with him at least 40-50,000 crowns, and he did not think he could forgo such a sum. As in the case of so many other murderers, the object Winge sought to achieve by murder appeared to him his by a right which he would have to renounce without compensation if he abstained from the murder. So also he had been quite certain that the postman would not suffer any injury or discomfort from being stunned, but would enjoy a few days or even weeks of pleasant rest from his wearisome and monotonous work. But he had also fortified his conscience in case the postman should succumb. His own difficult position was the justification for the sacrifice of the postman, who was sixty years old and therefore only had a few years of life left, whereas he had the whole of his splendid future before him. And finally, when he saw and talked to the postman, he became convinced that such a life tramping along the streets from morn till night in all weathers could only be a burden to the old man. He was doing him a service by freeing him from it.

## II

### ANGUISHED FEAR

THE most pronounced psychological distinguishing characteristic of this group of criminals is its ever-present consciousness of inability to satisfy the demands made upon it by life, or, more briefly expressed, its complete lack of self-confidence. This consciousness of incapacity is doubtless associated with congenital physical defects of an organic or neurotic kind, which medical research may sometimes be in a position to determine. Only in rare and exceptional cases it would appear to have developed from some extraordinary experience, or from the influences of environment during childhood, overloading normal but immature natures and thereby implanting an incurable fear of every form of life. But quite independently of its origin, this complete absence of self-reliance constitutes the central psychological influence which penetrates everywhere into the life of these criminals. Consequently I found that all the indications of moral decay or upheaval, which in the life of the average human being are concealed in depression, despair and abandon, manifested themselves in these criminals in such extreme consequences. If there is some justice in saying that despair is the one unforgivable sin, then these criminals are guilty of it from birth, or at least from earliest childhood, and it is not surprising that murderers of this type should commit the most abominable and inhuman crimes.

The individual who seems to me most typical of this group of criminals first attempted to poison his fiancée when she became pregnant as a consequence of their con-

nection, and subsequently murdered her immediately after intercourse. Before I began to visit him regularly in prison I obtained from the reports of the trial and the depositions the following particulars of his crime and of his career.

Bernt Gunnarsson was the son of peasant proprietors and had not, previous to his arrest at the age of 26½, left his parents' home for any length of time. He had passed through the elementary school and had been confirmed in the ordinary course, but already at the age of fifteen, when he began work on his parents' property, he had received medical attention for headache, nervousness and general debility. According to most of the witnesses he had a bad reputation for untruthfulness, coarseness and lasciviousness, and he was especially disliked and feared by the young girls of the district.

During the winter of the year in which he reached the age of twenty-six, he made the acquaintance of the daughter of a farm hand from another parish, Anna Bengtsson, who had temporary work in his native village, Gravered, and whom he subsequently murdered. In a short time they became intimate. Gunnarsson made representations to Anna that he intended to marry her and pretended for that reason to be looking for a suitable farm, though at the same time he did everything possible to keep their relation secret, and he declared at the trial that he had never had any intention of marrying her or anybody else. When it became known in the neighbourhood that Anna was pregnant and that Gunnarsson was the father of the expected child, he immediately decided to put her out of the way if the rumour should prove correct. When he learned the truth from Anna herself he succeeded in obtaining a bottle of strychnine and in persuading her to procure abortion, for which purpose he made her promise to take a dose which he knew to be fatal. Meanwhile Anna confided in her mother, who strictly forbade her in any way to do injury to the unborn child. When she informed Gunnarsson of what had hap-

pened he resolved, without any hesitation, to murder her in the manner which he afterwards adopted. One day towards the end of the summer he wrote to Anna, who had now returned home, and begged her to meet him the following evening on the road between Gravered and the nearest railway station, in order, first of all, to spend the night in his home and then to travel with him on Sunday to the nearest large town, several miles away. According to the evidence of Anna's relatives at the trial she still had full confidence in Gunnarsson ; she had hinted that she would return with a gold ring on her finger, and departed from home in the most joyous spirits. By some accident Gunnarsson could not meet her at the appointed place. Instead he found her at the Gravered dancing floor and asked her, when the dancing was over, to follow him at a distance along the road to his home. At a bend in the road, where nobody could see him, he stopped and persuaded her to accompany him to a meadow in the wood on the other side of the railway. Here he had intercourse with her and whilst he still held her in his arms he severed her jugular vein from back to front with a knife which he had concealed in his pocket, and which he had specially sharpened before he left home. Apparently Anna tried to defend herself, because on her body were found, in addition to the fatal wound, the marks of knife cuts on her cheeks and hands. After the murder Gunnarsson placed about her body a letter which he had written before he left home and in which Anna was made to say that she had committed suicide, and in which she accused a certain Carl Edvardsson of being the cause of her misfortune and her first betrayer. On the way home he washed the blood from his hands in a spring ; his clothes had not been bloodstained because he protected himself in the moment of committing the murder by Anna's cloak.

The body was found the following day and Gunnarsson was immediately arrested on suspicion. To the police, and on his trial, he denied from beginning to end everything

of which there was not irrefutable proof, and endeavoured in various ways to direct suspicion to the Edvardsson mentioned by Anna in the forged letter. Only by degrees and after hours of cross-examination during a period of two months was he forced to a full confession. During his examination by the police he not only denied all knowledge of the murder, but also all intimate relations with Anna. The night before the murder he had not even spoken to her, but only caught a glimpse of her during the dancing and heard her enquire for Edvardsson. During the two first examinations all he would admit was that on the evening of the murder he had a few words at the dance and in the road with Anna, who repeatedly enquired for Edvardsson. When the letter in which he made an appointment with Anna was found in her home after her death he denied having written it and pretended that Edvardsson had sent it to Anna in his name in order to throw suspicion of the murder on him, Gunnarsson. It was only at the third examination that he admitted having murdered Anna and being the father of her unborn child. He declared that he only heard from Anna herself that same evening in the forest that she was with child, and when she accused him of being father of the child he had become "as if demented" and attacked her with a knife which she happened to have in her hands because she had just found it on the road. He had written the forged letter afterwards in the wood on a piece of paper placed against his knee. Thereupon he made an unsuccessful attempt, in court, to write in this attitude, and finally admitted that he had brought the letter with him and had resolved to murder Anna as soon as he knew that she was with child. He further admitted that he planned the murder as soon as he was assured that his attempt to poison her had failed. Also as regards the latter, he stoutly denied all knowledge of it until his final confession. The only motive for the murder which he could give was his fear lest his parents, especially his mother, should discover his relations with Anna. By his own request he was sub-



jected to examination in respect of his sanity, but he was declared fully responsible for his acts and was condemned in each court to death, which sentence was commuted by the King to one of penal servitude for life.

I have already remarked that among criminals of this class—in contrast to those described in the previous study—prolonged efforts were usually necessary to arrive at a full understanding of the essential defects in their psychic lives. This peculiarity was, however, due only in a very slight degree to the fact that these criminals are by nature more restrained, taciturn, aloof and shy with strangers, as indeed in their general attitude towards life. There was within them—in spite of all their shyness—a necessity which consumed them like a fever, and which had its source in their radical defects, to explain and defend themselves to others, to induce somebody or other, no matter whom, to understand them and, in their opinion, to assume thereby at least some of the responsibility for their actions. And if these criminals in their prison life were more cut off psychically from their fellow creatures than were the majority, it was simply because their fellow prisoners as a rule very soon tired of listening to their ruminations and left them in solitude, since nothing else but their own ego interested them. Further, prison life naturally stimulated such criminals to communicativeness. During solitary confinement especially a visit from outside was to them, as to practically all prisoners, a red letter day of which they must take the utmost advantage; indeed it was often a great event in their lives, to which they looked forward for weeks, and remembered for years. It often happened during my studies in prison life that prisoners in solitary confinement made notes weeks beforehand of what they wished to talk about, and when I resumed my studies after an interruption of some years, the life-prisoners whom I revisited usually took it for granted that I remembered all the details of our previous conversation. The chief difficulty in the study of these criminals lay in the fact that their conscious life

was wholly resolved into a chaos of confused brooding on matters great and small, on events which had been of critical importance and on daily occurrences of no significance whatever, on what had happened the day before and raised real difficulties, and on the most innocent recollections of childhood or early youth, but always with anguished fear. In this ever shifting chaos it was extremely difficult to discover any fixed or reliable characteristics whatever. In a way the conscious psychic life of these prisoners was as good as meaningless, and also, owing to its diffuseness and lack of cohesion, its shifting and vagueness, it was never possible directly to observe the deeper psychological realities underlying it. It was therefore a considerable time before I clearly recognized that the determining force in their lives from beginning to end was nothing but their sense of insecurity, their cowardice, their terror of life, or, in a word, their complete lack of self-confidence.

In prison this bottomless sense of insecurity disclosed itself first and most obviously in the way their thoughts hovered always round what others had done, planned, intended, said, suggested, thought or felt as regards them, or, differently expressed, around the attitude which others adopted towards them. I often had the impression that some of these criminals simply did not live or exist except in their fear of the judgment of others.

At first, before they were satisfied that I really did wish to listen to their reflections on their crimes and their past life in general, what involuntarily appeared in our conversation, to the exclusion of all else, was their anxiety in their present surroundings, their anguished fear of the opinion of the prison authorities, the instructors, superintendents, gaolers and fellow prisoners. Afterwards it appeared that at the bottom of their hearts they were at least as feverishly engaged in discovering what persons who had lived near them or had only crossed their paths ten or twenty years ago, may possibly have thought of them. Even long after Gunnarsson had definitely decided to open his mind to me

and even though before each expected visit he undoubtedly endeavoured to the best of his ability to collect himself and to relate his experiences of life as he viewed them, yet he did not succeed in keeping his mind on the subject in hand whenever any real or imaginary offence to a superior, or a dispute with a fellow prisoner, stirred his blood with fear—and this happened nearly every day.

After racking his brains during many sleepless nights in an endeavour to relate what he considered the essential motive for his crime, he would have a sudden fear, for example, that the day before, or a week before, he had omitted to salute the governor's assistant. He had done so because he thought he had not been seen, but afterwards he began to fear that he was mistaken, and this fear as it were opened the doors to the inexhaustible terror which was so deep-seated in him. This terror escaped in uncontrollable nightmares when he contemplated the years and tens of years in front of him : the assistant had certainly interpreted his omission as a deliberate challenge and had perhaps already reported him, and he of course could not defend himself, but would be subjected to disciplinary punishment and would afterwards be branded during the whole term of his sentence, and, like all others so punished, would not be pardoned till long after the usual period. Or else some gaoler had noticed him and had been furious at his insolence, with the result that he would be victimized by the prison staff and thereby inevitably be dragged into new breaches of discipline, with new punishments and indefinitely postponed release, etc. All this appeared not only in the wildest nightmares but also in oppressive brooding over every circumstance which might make the terrible consequences more or less probable, as for example, above all things, whether the assistant and the gaoler, after what they had seen, were especially ill-disposed to him, or whether in general they were the kind of people to place difficulties in the way of prisoners. All their characteristics were naturally taken into consideration, and so on *ad infinitum*.

It may be mentioned in passing that Gunnarsson, though entirely uneducated, and with no interests outside himself, sometimes made, like many other criminals of the same type, amazingly acute psychological observations, even though they were usually mingled with even more amazing and unreal fantasies. In his particular case I was able to convince myself that neither the assistant nor the gaoler had noticed the omitted salute, and in general no superior had given so much as a thought to the episode in question. Similarly his almost constant fear of committing breaches of discipline was equally unfounded. After what has been said, it must be obvious that all criminals of this type involuntarily and studiously observed prison regulations with much more scrupulous attention than those who merely desired honestly to atone for their crime or deliberately sought to avoid prolonging their sentence.

At the same time it of course happened sometimes that Gunnarsson was in fact the object of suspicion and all its prison consequences. Soon after the conclusion of the three years of solitary confinement, when he had been transferred to the common prison and before he had found himself in the new conditions, which his imagination had naturally invested beforehand with all sorts of horrors and traps, two of his fellow prisoners succeeded, by seizing a suitable opportunity, in bringing him under suspicion of having smuggled in a packet of tobacco, which was found concealed in the prison yard, and he was confined for some days to his cell before he was examined and fully rehabilitated. On this and on other similar occasions there was a certain psychological interest in observing that all real difficulties into which he was drawn by the force of circumstances—of course he never voluntarily either in or out of prison fought against his difficulties, since to him the future seemed invincible and inscrutable—as it were swept away all terror from his consciousness, because they compelled him to act, to defend himself, to prove the impossi-

bility of the accusation, call witnesses, etc. But his liberation was at an end so soon as his object was achieved. Then the temporarily repressed terror broke out with redoubled force and allowed him to discover in his experiences innumerable new grounds for anxiety: the really guilty ones, who had been punished, would hate him and avenge themselves by laying traps for him everywhere, until they finally brought him down. Especially these two victims had many friends in the prison whom they would egg on, so that he would soon be detested and persecuted by his fellow prisoners, just as he was already persecuted by the prison staff. The fact that he had exerted his own strength to some slight extent in getting out of his troubles afforded him no satisfaction whatever. Only the goodwill of strangers who allowed him to hope for their protection and support could procure for him occasional quiet hours or happy days. A friendly word from a gaoler or a fellow prisoner sufficed sometimes to stimulate dreams of a brighter future, as remote from reality as were the nightmares of terror which were called forth by a reproach or a scowl. Meanwhile it was in the nature of things that Gunnarsson, like most other criminals of his type, gradually, and up to a certain point, acquired objective reasons for regarding himself as an outcast, branded and abhorred, even persecuted, by his fellow prisoners. The great majority of them, in the common prison, soon observed that he did not share any of their daily interests, and this in itself naturally made him suspect as a person not understood. But they also noticed that he never had a spark of sympathy and never showed any disposition to assist his fellow prisoners, and however little prisoners expect of each other in this regard, it nevertheless in the long run made them hate him. Thus he became in a short time one of the *foci* of the general discontent in the prison, which naturally always sought for some object on which to expend its force. His terror cut him off from all his neighbours, and consequently brought down

upon him their dislike, which increased his alarm, and so on in a vicious circle.

Meanwhile, as has already been said, it was not only his present, but also in an equal degree his past, acts of omission and commission which occupied his mind in prison. Deeper than all the stress of terror which was stimulated by daily occurrences was his incessant brooding over his life among those with whom he had once associated.

At the very beginning of my studies among prisoners under life sentence I had been struck by the curious way in which they lived in the past, or rather continued mentally the life which superficially had been closed by their crime. All the previous desires, hopes, plans, endeavours, cares, successes, joys, unrestrained vices, lusts, orgies, crimes and despair remained with them not only in memory but as actual, living, psychic realities, whilst life in prison and its daily routine passed over them like a misty dream, whose bearing or significance they were never able to grasp. Not infrequently this was possible by means of gigantic self-deception, whereby they really succeeded in entirely driving out of their consciousness, or at least in reducing in their own minds to the proportions of an insignificant and indifferent inconvenience, the long period of imprisonment before them. The consequence was that whilst in prison they could peacefully occupy their minds with visions of life after their release, much in the same way as a free man who is unfortunately delayed during a journey in a place where there is nothing to awaken his interest, may continue to dwell on his plans of the future. •

One of the prisoners whom I first learned to know intimately was a man of very old, South Swedish, peasant stock, for whom, despite his crime, evidently nothing really existed on earth except his farm and its management. One Christmas Eve, after more than twenty years in prison, he had received permission, as a reward for good behaviour, to purchase a book of his own choice, and he selected without hesitation a handbook on agriculture, which he had intended

to buy shortly before his arrest. He demonstrated to me with all the enthusiasm he possessed how splendidly one could follow in this book all the details of what should be done at the various seasons of the year on a large and well-managed farm, and what reforms he would introduce, by its help, in his own farm, so soon as he recovered control of it. There was not the least possibility of doubt that all this was just as real to him then as it had been twenty or twenty-five years before, and that it was in this, and not in his book-binding work in prison or among his fellow prisoners, that he had really lived during all those years. There was equally no doubt that his crime, inspired and directed by his mother, had passed over his selfless conscience as something quite insignificant in comparison with the proper management of the farm. The above-mentioned prisoner had become fatherless at an early age and had passed the whole of his childhood and early youth in almost complete isolation on a remote farm, under the sole influence of his mother, and without ever dreaming of escaping from her and becoming an independent human being. Before he was of age she had seduced him to incest. When evil rumours concerning them began to circulate in the district, and when they experienced difficulty in finding farm hands, his mother married him off to a related peasant girl, without, however, any intention of their consummating the marriage. When his young wife's parents came to her assistance and asserted her rights, quarrels arose and the mother incited him to murder his wife. During the trial, which lasted years, he denied the incest and also that his mother had had any part in the murder of his wife. Only when the mother was sentenced to death, in spite of her denials, and subsequently confessed, did the son admit her guilt.

In Gunnarsson's past nothing had really mattered except his fear of the judgment of others, his brooding over the cause of his incurable hesitancy and, finally, his hatred of all those around him who were self-confident, free, strong and happy. In prison he was still consumed by the same

despair, and I shall return later to the subject of this brooding and hatred of mankind.

His fear in the presence of others had dominated his whole life. When, on occasion, he came to speak of his childhood, it appeared that it had never occurred to him that his life could have been other than filled with terror of the grown-up and with self-contempt, because he was only a child, i.e., inferior to all real full-grown creatures. Without ever having reflected on the subject, he started on the assumption that these were the natural and normal feelings of children and that his life as a child was only a preparation in miniature for his later life. It may also be mentioned in passing that if criminals of this type often appear amazingly early in their development and therefore give rise to especially rosy hopes for the future in the minds of their relations, this is certainly due to the fact that their sense of inferiority urges them to endeavour to rise above their years, or seems to raise them above their years, the natural pleasures and ambitions of which they despise because they despise themselves. Owing to this precocity, and constantly urged on by his sense of insecurity in life, Gunnarsson succeeded in his growing years in thoroughly understanding which were the respected, rich and powerful, old peasant families in the district and which families or individuals were outside the privileged circle. To him this was the same thing as knowing where to look for the persons whose approval he must under all circumstances seek to obtain, and who belonged to the class whose opinion he might secretly despise and must even, under certain circumstances—though of course only with the support of the powerful—defy. Before he had reached the age of maturity his fears had, out of the class difference between peasant proprietors and landless farm labourers, created and definitely fixed in his mind that distorted image of humanity which, in his own opinion, was to be of such fateful significance in his life. It should be expressly emphasized, however, that just as little as Gunnarsson felt himself the equal of his



fellow prisoners, because he feared the prison officials more than they did, so also he never considered his status as good as that of men whom he regarded as pariahs, because his terror of the disapproval of the powers that be was greater than his terror of them. He had, indeed, never regarded himself as the equal of anybody. Still he had on some occasions in his past life entered into quasi-confidential relations with his fellow creatures. He had instinctively selected for this purpose those who were held in the least esteem in the village, persons degraded and down-and-out who lived by casual labour on the farms or by charity of one kind or another in the villages. He made them his grateful friends by inviting them to drinking orgies, or simply to a square meal when they were half starved. To them he opened the floodgates of his brooding philosophy, and from them he obtained—even when they were sober—understanding, approval, support and admiration. To them he was a superior simply because he had some money. When he was sober he despised them simply because everybody else did so. But in his thoughts he looked up to them, in spite of all their pitifulness, as living human beings who acted independently and of their own volition. For that reason, and by reason of their unbounded and sincere admiration for his whole personality, they were able to provide for him not merely moments of complete escape from himself and of supreme happiness in the intoxication of their orgies, but also the illusion, even for longer periods, of being a self-acting and self-willing being. In this respect also Gunnarsson's life was typical of the class of criminals to which he belonged. I had often encountered in my investigations into the past life of these criminals the same quasi-friendships, in which the one party in return for all sorts of material advantages supplied the self-confidence which the other lacked. It may also be mentioned that at least one of these depraved creatures, an ex-soldier, with whom Gunnarsson had been together drinking on the evening of the murder, proved a true friend in so far as he perjured

himself at the trial for the sake of Gunnarsson, and could only be induced to give true evidence, incriminating Gunnarsson, after he had been referred to his spiritual guide and had been warned as to the meaning of his oath.

It was just because he brooded as feverishly in prison over these fearsome relations of various kinds with his fellow creatures as he had done when they were realities that I was able to follow them into the smallest detail and thus to discover whatever had played a significant part in his ordinary life before the murder.

Meanwhile it was of course primarily what individuals of the ruling class had said or thought or felt that continually occupied his mind. Both of his parents belonged by birth to the class which he feared so much—Gunnarsson related with unconcealed pride even in prison that his parents had been wealthy peasants for time out of mind—and he had therefore from earliest childhood lived among people whose every word and expression filled him with special fear. If any one of his more important peasant relatives in the village thoughtlessly let fall a reproach of his behaviour, it cut for ever into his soul, and the wound, which was kept open for decades by his brooding over it, still smarted when I made his acquaintance in prison as much as it had done on the day it was inflicted.

His earliest clear recollection was of a Christmas evening when he had been frightened to tears the whole night by some dressed-up carol singers whom, it appears, he had conceived to be the messengers of the highest powers, sent to fetch him to everlasting damnation. The other children rejoiced round the Christmas tree at their fine glittering costumes, which to their minds doubtless conveyed a glimmer of an opening heaven. In spite of his weeping and panic-stricken fear he had gathered that one of the older people in the room had said something to his father about what would happen to such a cowardly and miserable creature in later life. And when Gunnarsson related this episode to me he almost seemed to believe that

his incurable timidity when confronted by life and all its terrors and crimes had been implanted in him just that evening, though less by the fright he had received than by the words of condemnation which he had heard. It should, however, be expressly repeated that his more or less unconscious guesses as to the cause of his inability to stand up to life varied according to the form which his brooding happened to assume at any particular moment.

As he grew up, he naturally more and more often heard reproachful and hostile words both from relatives and from others in the district. The mere fact that he never sought anything else but support and sympathy from his fellow creatures, and could never himself offer anything in return, soon made him despised. In addition, the older he grew the more striking became his inability to do the work which fell to his lot as the son of the house on his parents' farm, and the more irritating became his lapses into drunkenness and whoring, in which he went to pieces because he lacked the minimum of self-confidence which is the most elementary foundation of a unified, orderly, purposeful and restrained life. In Gunnarsson's life, as in that of all other criminals, it was clear as day that his lusts were by no means the effect of excessively strong natural impulses, but simply a product of decadence resulting from the incurable natural defects of his nature, from the essential weakness of his whole being. Of course he endeavoured to the best of his ability to conceal his dram-drinking and his secret pursuit of all the lonely and unprotected young girls in the district, just as he sought in general to conceal as long as possible everything which happened in his life, since whatever he did was preceded and followed by torturings of conscience. The result was once again that he was regarded as cowardly and false in everything. Finally, his increasing torture broke out, when it could not be diverted by, maudlin outpourings in the presence of admiring, depraved drinking companions, more and more in mad attacks on those of his own age and on others whom he envied and

hated with increasing violence as each year passed. In this way the general dislike of him naturally increased, so that among honest and industrious people he was not only despised as worthless and indolent, but also detested as a treacherous, lying, false, cowardly, brutal, vicious creature, who was a danger to society. As all this became more and more clear to me in prison my attention was involuntarily drawn to the fact that Gunnarsson never concerned himself with what he had done or omitted to do, but always with what others thought of his manner of living. He neither denied nor regretted his lusts—a psycho-criminological fact of the deepest interest to which I shall return at greater length in another connection—they simply left him entirely indifferent, cold and unaffected, as if they had belonged to the past of some stranger. What interested him exclusively was the extent to which his unclean debauches were known to his parents and other ordinary peasants; how much had become known of all that he tried to conceal because he had been ashamed of it beforehand: in a word, how much of his subterranean life had been brought to light and what the people of the village had said and thought concerning it; how they regarded him and judged him, what attitude they adopted towards him. In order to obtain certainty on this point—complete certainty once and for all, so that he might live in the future as an independent being, without wasting a thought on others' opinion of him—his brain was busy in prison as uninterruptedly as during the whole of his past life with collecting, fixing, weighing, valuing, penetrating and grouping in a final whole every word he had heard of himself from as far back as he could remember until the day sentence was pronounced. An old and benevolent district magistrate had once said to his mother while Gunnarsson was still ill in bed and broken down after an unusually wild and prolonged debauch something like this: "There is no harm in the boy, only he has too easy a time at home on the farm. That is why he is wild and drinks and runs after

the girls. Many a good fellow has done the same before him and has turned out all right as soon as he steadied down and got seriously to work." To these words Gunnarsson returned time after time as if to a pleasant oasis in the wilderness of hatred and curses which was otherwise all that he remembered of his life among his fellow men. In those words he really succeeded sometimes in finding peace and comfort : the magistrate was one of the richest and most respected peasants, and perhaps what he had said represented the general opinion ; in any case there were not many who would have dared openly to contradict such a man. Perhaps after all he had not been judged as harshly as he had always thought ; perhaps others had understood him better than he did himself and had never despised or hated him at all, but only complained of him and felt boundless sympathy for him, especially after the misfortune which had put an end to his life among them. It was quite naturally at times when his brooding had wearied him to the point of stupefaction that Gunnarsson could rock himself to sleep with such dreams of universal sympathy and understanding, in which all his tortures vanished and he was able to meet the future pure and strong. Such periods, or rather hours or moments, of complete reconciliation had presumably been the happiest in his past life, just as they still were in prison. But they could not, in the nature of things, be of long duration, especially in prison, where the period of stupefaction could not be prolonged by inebriety. Soon he was forced to admit to himself that the old magistrate was generally known as a kindhearted, harmless old fellow, of whose words nobody took any notice, and that of course he had only wanted to comfort his mother and therefore did not really mean anything by what he had said : in his heart he had certainly despised and detested him as profoundly as everybody else had done. And then there rushed upon him in surging masses all the condemnatory words which he had heard or thought he had heard or guessed or imagined in his past life. But

in order to convince himself of, and understand, the real meaning of each of these words he was obliged—just as in the case of the dissatisfaction of the assistant or the enmity of his fellow prisoners—to examine point by point all the circumstances under which they were uttered and all the qualities of the persons who had uttered them, and so on, *ad infinitum*. If he sometimes succeeded for a day in driving away his gloomy fears of what people had once thought of him by telling himself that it all belonged to the past and had nothing to do with his future, it availed him little, for his fears pursued him in his sleep ; he could wake up bathed in a perspiration of terror, because in one form or another he had dreamed of the disapproval which he had tried to suppress in his waking hours.

There was, however, one person in Gunnarsson's life who, in his imagination at least, occupied a special position, who exercised a predominating influence on all his conduct, and who cannot therefore be associated with his timidity towards his fellow-creatures—his mother.

I now touch upon a question which, in my opinion, no criminal psychologist can avoid in the long run : the strange inner psychic relationship which exists between so many criminals and their mothers.

Time after time during my studies among murderers I was struck by the fact that just the most brutal criminals—men who, however different their psychological natures may have been in the beginning, and who had a stereotyped incapacity to conceive their fellow creatures as anything but dead matter or as the means to the satisfaction of their animal lusts ; in other words men who for a long time had been cut off from any sort of association with humanity—were nevertheless frequently attached to their mothers by bonds which seemed even stronger than those which one ordinarily finds between mother and son.

At first it made a bewildering, though often deeply affecting, impression to find, amidst such animal excess, so much warm, living human feeling ; feeling, too, which

*prima facie*, cannot at all be classified with the all-embracing sentimentality by which all sorts of criminals periodically seek, with or without the assistance of religion, to numb their feelings, and the ultimate source of which is simply boundless self-pity. It was evident from the beginning that these feelings were sufficiently strong to motivate consistent action, in so far as some of these criminals submitted for years to personal sacrifices in order to send, out of their earnings, presents or financial support to their mothers. At first I was perhaps inclined to accept the simple explanation that these primitive instincts, just because of their infinitely remote origin in the life of mankind, might have survived and defied even such complete moral destruction as that which was apparent in the souls of these murderers. But when I came to know the real nature of these feelings I found that in spite of all external resemblances they had scarcely anything in common with what grown men in ordinary life feel for their mothers.

One of the prisoners under life sentence whom I visited at the same time as Gunnarsson was a boy of only about twenty years of age, whose lack of feeling and will power would seem to have detached him from all real connection with whatever occurred in his own life or in that of others. At the age of eighteen he had drifted into a relation with a girl of his own age, obviously much more energetic and enterprising than himself, who worked in the same factory and lived in the same house in the industrial community where both were born—a relation which one may describe as purely sensual, because it clearly lacked the least suspicion of spiritual influence—and when she refused the responsibilities of motherhood he drifted into becoming the accomplice of her crime by assisting her when, immediately after their birth, she murdered the three children born to her during the period of their intimacy. He had begged her to marry him so that the children might live, and had done everything possible to his weak nature to persuade her to abandon the contemplated crime, but he of course lacked

the strength to force her to do so by threatening to denounce her or otherwise. At the same time he had faithfully and regularly done the work to which his mother put him when he left school. He belonged to a class of criminals especially numerous among habitual thieves, related indeed to the class now under discussion to the extent that they had a dull paralysed consciousness of their own weakness, but distinguished from it by the fact that they were too powerless even on reflection to rise above it or to concern themselves with their fate.

In prison, especially during solitary confinement, his psychic nature underwent a slow death week by week and month by month, until finally I could see no spark of real life in his eyes, except when he spoke of his mother. Concerning everything in his past or future life he spoke, like all other criminals of the same type, as indifferently and as completely unaffected as if some person were under discussion whose name he had never heard. Of his sweetheart he had nothing more to say than that she was a lively girl whom everybody liked to be with and that—although he had never thought of it until I mentioned it—he would be willing to marry her, if she liked, when he was again at liberty. The present, i.e., what happened in prison, meant nothing whatever to him either in thought or feeling. But the moment he mentioned his mother, he visibly woke up, and the whole of his being was animated by a calm inward happiness and a sort of eagerness to find words to tell me as much as possible of what they had in common. These criminals, owing to their apathy and their consequent lack of practice in speaking, found great difficulty in expressing themselves and they involuntarily hesitated when they wished to say anything especially near to their hearts. Fortunately it had never been necessary for him to leave his mother, and until he was eighteen he had scarcely been away from her for a single evening. Since he was an only child and his father was dead, there was nothing to disturb them. During all these years he had evidently



been as happy and as undisturbed by all the evil of the world and all the struggles of life as when he rested beneath his mother's heart, embedded in the flesh of her protection. School work had been a pleasure to him, and he had been a good pupil, because it enabled him to teach his mother to read and write and a number of other useful things with which they occupied themselves in the long winter evenings, for his mother had never been to school. Now, afterwards, he remembered with special joy and gratitude their common studies, because otherwise his mother would not have been able to write to him in prison. His work at the factory had made him happy because he thought all the week of returning home at noon on Saturday to his mother with his untouched earnings. They had been sufficient for them both in the last years, so that his mother could put her earnings in the savings bank for her old age, in case he should die before her. Indeed at that time he had scarcely any unsatisfied desire. Then the girl had come into his life. They had met at meetings of a temperance society which he had joined because it was usual among the young people at the factory, and she had succeeded in luring him out to tea parties, excursions, etc. But he had never felt any rest; on the contrary he had been constantly agitated by fear in her company. In any case he had not been out with her many evenings and his mother had never had any suspicion of the relations between them. As soon as he was safely at home again with his mother he had never thought of his sweetheart or the murdered children or of anything else in the outer world. In prison his life was filled by her monthly letters—which he re-read daily and in which he continually found something new and joyful—and by the hope that some day before she died she would be able to accomplish the expensive, whole-day journey to Stockholm to visit him. When he spoke of this possibility his eyes lit up like those of a four-years child when it speaks of its approaching birthday.

Many modern psychologists would probably find in the

undeniably strange relation of these criminals to their mothers the profoundest explanation of the ruin of their lives, and also a new and striking proof of the extraordinary part which the rooting of the sexual desires in the newborn child's longing for re-union with the mother has played, in their opinion, in the psychic life of man and in human history in general. For my part I am firmly convinced from my studies in criminal psychology that all attempts to explain the psychic life of criminals by assuming sexuality as the primary and determining force in their lives must ever be doomed to be either a superficial and often unworthy juggling with words—especially if the conception of sexuality is simply extended to mean the same thing as vital energy in general—or else, by arbitrary and fundamentally misdirected surmises, to divorce investigation from reality.

In fact it is my conviction that among criminal instincts the sexual instincts are on the contrary *never* of more than secondary importance, for even when they break out in incest, violation of children, rape or other abnormal crimes, there are always deeper-seated defects of different origin which in the last resort have played the determining rôle.

This strange relationship between a comparatively large number of criminals and their mothers proved, as soon as I acquired a fuller knowledge of it, as palpably as anything else in their lives to be dependent on their need of support, their sense of insecurity and the consciousness of their own incapacity. The psychic divergence from the mother, the development into an independent human being, which proceeds in every normal child as life opens out to its consciousness, its own desires and awakening will, prompting it to activity: all these simply cannot exist in the life of these criminals, since they lack from the beginning all the foundations of an independent life and of personal responsibility. They were brought into life with an incurable terror of existence, forced with horror from their mother's womb to meet their destiny, and they therefore unconsciously

shrank from the struggle for which they felt themselves unfit, clutched with the strength of despair at their mothers, and tried to conceal and forget themselves, just like children who are terrified by something inconceivable, hostile and supernatural. Thus their development is arrested just at the point where that of others begins and they are bound for all time, like helpless children, to their mothers. Their life becomes either a lifeless vegetating in their mothers' bosoms or else a wild chaos of unchecked instincts and brooding over their inability to live like others.

It was, as is well known, one of the first theses of criminal psychology that the psychic life of criminals reveals a striking resemblance, or relationship, to that of the child, and in this respect more detailed investigations may in fact, within certain limits, confirm, in a manner which could not be foreseen, the first and necessarily superficial observations of the new science.

• If this dependence of criminals upon their mothers ever has an unconscious erotic tinge, it is in any case a matter of complete indifference so far as deeper psychological research is concerned; it is only of significance as a link, but never as a real driving force in their development. In another connection I shall pause to enquire whether the anxiety of these criminals in the struggle for life does not often diffuse itself with far more fateful effects and distort the sexual instincts into other forms.

Meanwhile it is in the nature of things that the mothers just as little as anybody else could impart to their children the strength which they themselves lacked for independent life. At best they were sometimes able, as in the case just mentioned, by keeping their children completely aloof from real life, even when of mature age, to secure for them some years of passive, empty, Nirvana-like happiness, i.e., happiness of the only kind possible in their useless existence. In this state they might sometimes continue to vegetate for decades after the life-sentence had freed them from all the respon-

sibilities of an independent existence. But for this to be possible, as has been said, special psychological premises, which fall outside the scope of this work, are necessary.

In the case of Gunnarsson it was his mother whose disapproval he first and above all feared and against whom he was more completely defenceless than against anybody else. His general incapacity, as well as his fear of mankind and of life, became concentrated in her presence, simply because in the ordinary course of nature she not only once had been, but also, for the reasons given above, had always remained in his eyes the sole real representative of mankind. But just because she was so, and in a very special sense, he conceived her as being to an extraordinary degree animated by the feelings, instincts, outlook and principles of life with which he endowed mankind in the distorted image of reality which fear had born in him and from which he only succeeded in freeing himself to some extent a long time after his crime. For although he was as deeply conscious as anyone could be of the fact that others were equipped by nature with the requisite capacity for life—the self-reliance which he lacked—yet he could not, on the whole, conceive of his fellow creatures as being other than impelled by the same motives as himself, and equally little could he doubt that the terrifying image of life which was thus fixed in his consciousness corresponded with reality and was shared by those around him. It had of course also been easy for him for many years to snatch at isolated words and acts, to interpret and construe them in such a manner that they constituted a striking proof of his own deepest convictions, i.e., that for her also the highest moral law was, under all circumstances, to seek to act according to the wishes of the ruling class. It may perhaps be mentioned in passing that if Gunnarsson's fear of his mother's dissatisfaction never exercised any noteworthy influence on his actions until the last fateful months before the murder, that was due to the simple fact that hitherto he had always hoped to be able to conceal whatever she dis-

approved of. Gunnarsson lived his whole life, so to speak, in secrecy, and after what has been said it need not be further emphasized that he lacked the most elementary predisposition to feel any obligation to speak the truth either to his mother or to anybody else. The whole conception of truthfulness was evidently nothing more to him than an empty word, as unintelligible as many others in the catechism, and although he was doubtless conscious of the fact when he lied, since he was always afraid of being discovered—otherwise, like so many other criminals, he would never have been able to distinguish between truth and falsehood—yet it never occurred to him for a moment that he had done anything wrong. Even in the reports of the trial and in the depositions my attention was held by the fact that Gunnarsson had not been able to plead to the court any more intelligible or more favourable motive for murdering his sweetheart than that he had been afraid that his mother should discover their relationship, and during my visits to him in prison I naturally soon discovered that he still lived and always had lived in the above-described state of dependence on his mother, which I had also observed in various other criminals psychologically related to him. Gunnarsson was also continually pre-occupied in prison with thoughts of his mother, and sometimes there spread over his tortured, half-fatuous, half-brooding features, not indeed a gleam of happiness, as in the case mentioned above, but at least a suspicion of tranquillity, restfulness and peace, when he spoke of her. His continual anguished brooding really appeared to cease for short periods when he remembered that even after the murder his mother's love still survived. At such times he could clearly also forget everything that had happened in his life, anguished fear, brooding, sweetheart, the murder, and I had at such moments a direct impression that he in some indescribable way lived, so to speak, outside space and time. It clearly appeared to him that the prime cause of his misfortune was that he had ever left his mother. To

this thought he returned time after time, with the probably conscious thought that he ought never to have ceased to be guided by her. Since at the same time, as I shall soon show, he considered his mother's influence responsible for all the misery of his life, it may be mentioned now that though these two thoughts were in logical opposition, yet they were by no means in psychological opposition to each other: the former proceeded from his deep-seated longing to get away from life and the latter was clearly of the same origin, but shaped and adapted to account for his ruined life. Moreover, he related with evident satisfaction, as something obvious, that in spite of his twenty-six years she had apparently always decided for him, i.e., only by misleading her could he do anything she had forbidden or for which he had not obtained her permission. It had never occurred to him to seek to resist this assumed guardianship. On the contrary, the only comparatively happy periods in his life—i.e., periods of release from the agony of fear—had been when he succeeded in giving implicit obedience to her, and when on occasion he resolved to begin a new life he never dreamed that it could happen in any other way than by returning to his mother and by submitting to her will as completely as he supposed he had done as a small child. When Gunnarsson spoke in prison of his repeated attempts to raise himself by a single act of his own free will from his fallen state, he was fully and firmly convinced that he would have been saved for all time if he could only have got back to his mother, as was always his most ardent desire. But I did not obtain a perfectly clear insight into the rôle which his mother played in his life until one day about half a year after I came to know him, when he himself frankly laid before me what he himself considered to be the deepest motive of the murder. And now I reach what is at the same time the most hopelessly banal and completely unreal confession that I have ever received during my studies in criminal psychology.

Gunnarsson had that day for the first and only time during

the period in which I was occupied with him specially asked a warder for permission to speak with me. It was clearly only after weeks of unbearable suspense, and with the help of his last resources of courage, that he had resolved to confide the inmost secret of his life to a stranger, and he was now consumed with impatience not to bear this secret alone for a single day or night longer. If it was in general difficult for him to express what he wished, because even whilst speaking everything he thought and felt was dissipated by his anguished brooding, so now at first he could only breathlessly and with beating heart force out completely disconnected, unintelligible words concerning details of his life in his native village. But as the matter of his narrative—which he felt he must at all costs give—dragged him out of his solitary brooding, and as the fact that at long last he did relate it to a fellow creature clothed it in a new reality, he succeeded in spite of all the self-torture it involved in giving a living picture of his own conception of the motives of his crime.

He began by referring to what he called the haughtiness of the peasants, i.e., their pride in having belonged for generations to the peasant proprietor class, their contempt of those born in the landless class, and their systematic struggle to prevent anyone within the magic circle from mixing with the despised outsiders. This hauteur was their most marked characteristic, more marked even than their meanness. If a peasant married a very poor peasant girl he did not lose caste among the other peasants. At most they thought him unwise, though that was his business, and if the girl were capable in her work it might even be better than if she had been dowered with a farm. But if he married the daughter of a farm hand or a workman he was banished for ever from the community of his equals, and if his wife slaved from morn till eve in the home for the whole of her life, and their joint labours maintained the farm in a prosperous condition, or even extended it, she could never rise to be the equal of her husband or his family.

The priest might utter words of reconciliation by her grave, but her children and her children's children must bear the consequences of her shame. It might indeed sometimes happen that after some years the man was received into grace again when his fellows were convinced that in spite of all he would not ruin his farm by drunkenness or by associating with other loose women, as was of course to be expected since he had married below him. But this occurred only on condition that he allowed his wife to be treated as nothing, or as non-existent, or, in other words, as what she was—a servant maid. Then he could breathe again among his equals at Christmas festivals, weddings, funerals and baptisms, but she was not invited, any more than the other servant maids, by the real peasants' wives. Only occasionally a peasant wife who wanted to beg for help or money would sometimes condescend to associate with her, but even she usually soon withdrew, frightened by the displeasure of the others. Otherwise she went about alone through life as if branded, despised even by her own servants, maids and stable hands on the farm, who were in their own way just as haughty as the peasants, and were ashamed before their fellows to be in the service of such an one as she, no better than themselves. But whether they preferred to let the wife sicken with anxiety or become confirmed in lonely bitterness at home, whilst the husband lived the life of an unmarried man in the district; or whether they decided to suffer their isolation and the displeasure of others together, the result was sooner or later the same: either the husband finally sought consolation for his misfortune in drink and let the farm go to ruin, till it had to be sold, and they seek work in the nearest town, or if he were of sterner stuff, they decided, after ten years or so of endurance, to sell their property and start a new life in America or some other place where nobody knew them. In either event the peasants had conquered, and those who ventured to defy their unwritten laws were driven out—and as a rule the land reverted to proper hands when some relation bought



it at auction for an old song. Thus it had fared with a cousin of Gunnarsson, who had married an elder sister of Anna, Gunnarsson's sweetheart. They had fought against odds for more than ten years before they threw up the sponge and emigrated to America, and Gunnarsson was indefatigable in his accounts of what his mother had told him of all their year-long sufferings. All this had happened before Gunnarsson was big enough to be able to remember it, but in prison it was just as vividly before him as if he had followed it day by day. To Gunnarsson this cousin had become, through his mother's accounts, a single, though more than sufficiently terrible, example. It is true that they now possessed, as he asserted, a large farm in America and were richer than any of the peasants at home. It was true, too, that they had sent money for several years past to her mother and sometimes, at Christmas and on birthdays, to Anna, her sister. But it could not, after all, be a real life that they led so far away, cut off for ever from those among whom they had once tried to live, and whose displeasure they of course felt just as keenly in their loneliness abroad as they had done at home. But what applied to marriage also applied, though in a less degree, to looser relations. The contempt of the peasants for their subordinates was so strong that they could not tolerate any association between them and their sons. They might wink at an occasional night spent with a servant girl, but even that was as repellent to them as if the girl had been an animal. Any sort of serious connection, however, in which the girl began to appear as a future wife, was a stain on the family and the guilty one was persecuted remorselessly till he mended his ways and submitted, or else left the district. To have a child by such a girl was almost as degrading as to marry her.

It should be noted that Gunnarsson related all this not as something in which he himself at the moment still believed, except for a very small part. On the contrary he expressly emphasized the fact that since he had mixed with and come

to know so many people in life—Gunnarsson actually used this phrasing when, in this connection, he referred to his having been committed to prison—he had naturally understood that all this talk of the peasant's position and power over everything was absurdly exaggerated, even if it had a certain foundation of truth. He related it rather in order to advance to the deepest and most intimate secret of his life: that such had his mother been, thus had she viewed life and men, thus had she lived among them and brought up her children—and that was why he had committed murder when he could neither marry the daughter of a farm-hand nor suffer the shame of having a child by her. It was with supreme anguish and trembling in every limb, as if he too were on the point of physical disruption, that Gunnarsson forced out this amazing confession, in which the depths of his being were in reality laid bare: his dependence, his sense of insecurity and his self-contempt, which made him ashamed of the distorted conceptions which had dominated his whole life, and in which, in the depths of his heart, he still believed at least in part. It also enabled him to convince himself that he need not shoulder the responsibility for them, since they originated with his mother, whom he might therefore despise and abhor as profoundly as he despised himself, since he was as indissolubly bound up with her as with his own ego.

Of course I was not able to determine in detail to what extent there existed objective foundations for all these anguished conceptions of life and humanity. Yet from the evidence at the trial and from Gunnarsson's involuntary narrative during our conversation in prison, there was no doubt that his mother harboured very much the same respect, neither more nor less, for the peasant-proprietors as did others in her position, and that she was a completely commonplace person.

In the more important spheres of life the complete lack of self-reliance of Gunnarsson, and of others of his type, showed itself most conspicuously in his inability to con-

concentrate on regular work or on a sustained effort to reach either an instinctive or a conscious objective. Even a superficial survey of the psychological predispositions to all human work must show that one of them—and by no means the least significant—is a certain minimum degree of confidence in one's own power of overcoming the obstacles which are associated with every task. But this confidence simply does not exist among such criminals. This fact appears immediately in their daily prison life. Even though it was only a question of the very simplest kind of work, with precise instructions and unremitting supervision, frequently requiring no initiative whatever, and although—for reasons already shown—they did everything in their power to conform to regulations, and not least in respect of the work demanded of them, they never succeeded in reaching the obviously very low average prison level of achievement. This was clearly a consequence of the same sense of insecurity as, in the form of fear of the displeasure of their superiors, constantly urged them to achieve results by which they might find favour, yet in the form of lack of self-confidence, i.e., fear of failure, threatened equally to paralyse them during the execution of their work. For the task imposed on Gunnarsson during the period of solitary confinement—the making of simple parts of uniforms—only a few simple manual movements were required, and I was able to ascertain that he had fully mastered them in a few weeks. Nevertheless, during the time that I knew him, and after more than two years' constant practice, he lived in what was to all intents and purposes unremitting fear of the possibility that by clumsiness, mistake, forgetfulness, thoughtlessness, ignorance or other cause he might injure the material or the tools which had been given to him. Especially was he tortured by the necessity of handling the large tailors' shears, with which a whole piece of cloth might be destroyed by a single involuntary movement to right or left, and he felt a mixture of fear and hate for all his tools, as if they were treacherous enemies who were

constantly laying snares for his destruction, against which he had no means of defence. In other words, he felt in the presence of these inanimate things very much what he felt in the presence of human beings. Not even in the rare hours or days when a word of praise from his supervisors or the prison authorities threw him into an intoxicated state of joy and stimulated brilliant dreams for the future was he able fully to believe that during these years he had developed into a fully responsible craftsman and that he was now comparable with other workmen. In his heart, on the contrary, he remained convinced that his work must be vitiated by some defect which rendered it worthless, although neither he nor anybody else could say what the defect was. In this belief there was concealed the instinctive conviction that even in prison he lived the life of a deceiver, in so far as now, as ever, he was not doing any *real* work. I shall return in another connection to this feeling, so markedly typical of criminals of this type, that their whole life was in reality one single unbroken deception. It should be added here that this strange feeling, combined with the direct lack of self-confidence in their work from which it springs, naturally in its turn became a new source of anguished dreams of what awaited them if ever they should irretrievably compromise themselves and the whole truth of their lives should be revealed. In this way their sense of insecurity was again intensified and their difficulty in performing their task was further increased. Here also their life revolved in a vicious circle from which they could only tear themselves free at isolated moments, which left no lasting effect.

In my conversations in prison with Gunnarsson and other criminals of the same psychological type I heard deliberate accounts of events and conditions in their past lives which seemed to them of critical importance. I also heard accidental references to episodes and spontaneous promptings which seemed to them quite insignificant. But in both cases I obtained what I believe to be a complete insight into the rôle which their sense of insecurity played in their

development by crippling them in their daily work, and above all by rendering it impossible for them to make up their minds to any sphere of activity, profession or career in life.

At school and during instruction before confirmation they generally succeeded, it is true, in satisfying to some extent the demands laid upon them. Of course, even then they were in constant fear of failure ; they were never able to convince themselves that they had learnt their lesson perfectly, and if ever it happened that they were unable to detect any fault in their daily work their growing self-reliance was immediately shattered by the feeling that they had sinned against some unknown power which would sooner or later punish them for their presumption by exposing to the world their real incapacity. They therefore slunk to school every morning half-crippled by the agonized fear of the unknown dangers which awaited them. But thanks to the fact that there, as later in prison, they were constantly under the eyes of their mentors the fear of incurring displeasure was the strongest force in their lives. Moreover, it was naturally a great help to them during these years that their path was marked out for them day by day towards a definite objective which drew them on because they might hope, with some reason, that it was the gate through which they must pass to all that they longed for in real life. As in most other criminals there was concealed in them a tendency to self-deception which was stronger than in the average human being, and the majority of them doubtless succeeded, therefore, in persuading themselves more or less unconsciously that all their sufferings in school would dissolve and vanish as something quite insignificant on the day that they received their school-leaving and confirmation certificates and became free, adult, independent human beings. From that moment they would no longer need to be ashamed of subordination to others, but would go out into life the equals of all. Life would begin with all its boundless possibilities, which, it is true, in their day-dreams

they did not in any way attempt to visualize as a part of the reality which manifestly lay in front of them. From these dreams a bright streak of happiness sometimes penetrated into the anguish-filled darkness of their childhood, and it is certain that their dreams assisted these criminals in successfully assimilating their school and confirmation instruction.

But if, owing to their lack of self-confidence, every task constituted for these criminals such a daily and hourly struggle for self-mastery that they could never carry out any regular work except under the discipline of the school or prison, so also they were of course still less able to resolve upon a profession or in general to follow any plan of regular work by which they might acquire an object in life. Even the simplest craft appeared in their imagination as an impenetrable chaos of difficulties, and they shunned the thought that sooner or later they would be required, on their own responsibility, to take up a place, however modest, in an orderly scheme of work, as if it were a mortal sin and deadly presumption. Above all things they were vitally crippled by the inevitable fact that sooner or later they would come into competition with others, real human beings, possessing that power to look after themselves in life which they in their hearts knew that they completely lacked and would never acquire. The consequence was that from the moment when their development as independent human beings should have begun their psychic life was shattered in respect of the deepest foundation of all individual life, i.e., the instinct of self-preservation. What remained was in reality in complete accord with one of my first impressions—nothing else than a confused mass of instincts, suddenly breaking out, permeated, and to that extent, it is true, unified, by their anguished, instinctive consciousness of their own incapacity and their brooding over its causes. Under these circumstances it was quite natural that external conditions or accidental suggestions from strangers should determine almost exclusively their

way of life when necessity or fear of the contempt of their neighbours forced them to seek work. During my studies in prison I had a clear insight into the fate of various prisoners as determined superficially by some clearly accidental, indifferent remarks of persons whom they regarded as influential or as being in authority. In their bottomless sense of insecurity they had clung to whatever might give them the illusion that there was an object in life for them also.

Yet it should be especially emphasized in this connection that there was no sharp distinction between the criminal types described in this and the preceding study. On the contrary, I met in prison not a few mixed types whose careers had clearly been the results of the fundamental characteristics of both of these extremes. It is a fact well known in general psychology that cheerfulness and despair, self-deception and self-condemnation are often found in the same soul, and in this as in so many other respects I found more or less innocent average human defects developed among criminals to such an extraordinary degree that they destroyed every moral and social instinct. It is perhaps also deserving of special remark that the mood of such criminals by no means oscillated only between the extremes of cheerfulness and despair. I also discovered a most amazing and blissful light-heartedness, which was quite certainly founded on and even constantly suffused by despair, just as, on the contrary, I also found the deepest despair founded on and constantly saturated with cheerfulness. Individuals so constituted might drag along for weeks and months with casual work, spiritually crippled by boundless self-contempt, until one fine day it became clear to them that all their reverses were due to the fact that, for example, the foreman in the factory had come to dislike them as a result of some accidental misunderstanding, or that they themselves, owing to their superiority in some respect, could not work together with their fellows, or simply because the climate

in the town depressed them—and that everything would be all right if only they could obtain work which really suited them. Then, after such an awakening to a full understanding of everything over which they had brooded, and filled with the brightest dreams of the future, and really happy, they could wander forth to some place of which they scarcely knew the name, but with an imperturbable conviction that they would find there everything they had ever desired in respect of joyous work, companionship, diversions and possibilities of development. Especially the ranks of vagabonds and confirmed thieves are recruited to a considerable extent from criminals of this type, though they are also found among murderers. Finally, some of these criminals naturally approximated to one or other of these two extreme types almost to the point of identity. Among some of them faint traces of self-reproach were only to be found at rare moments, among others only equally rare and insignificant attempts at self-deception. Occasionally I found among habitual vagabonds certain individuals who drifted from place to place without any hopes of work or other comfort simply because the mere change of scene momentarily satisfied their longing to have an object in life.

So far as Gunnarsson is concerned, neither he nor his relations had ever had any other future plans for him than that, as soon as he had reached the necessary age, he should participate in the work on the parental farm, which, humanly speaking, he would some day inherit. After his confirmation he was therefore as a matter of course set to work with which he had been familiar since childhood, and what was expected of him was, objectively, neither exacting nor difficult. But his lack of self-confidence hindered him in every detail of his work. He sought in vain to acquire from others the power he lacked himself by seeking from every one of his elders on the farm advice or even orders, so that he might feel himself free from all obligation to exercise his personal judgment, and free from all respon-



sibility. For this reason alone his work was to all intents and purposes valueless. As a result of these daily failures—which, as was his nature, he never ascribed to external difficulties but always to his own incapacity, and the significance of which he exaggerated a thousandfold in his brooding (of which more later)—he naturally came to fear and hate, just as he did later in prison, everything pertaining to his work. At the same time there grew up in him a terror of the future and its constantly increasing demands on his independence which would one day culminate in his being obliged to take the whole responsibility of the farm, when he knew at the bottom of his heart that he was incapable of doing the duties of the youngest stable boy and that he, whatever the cause, was fundamentally and hopelessly incapable of learning a thousandth part of what was necessary for the proper management of a peasant's estate. However clear and simple was the future which circumstances had marked out for him, he could consequently never regard it as something possible of achievement in reality. It remained for him always an evil, terrifying and fatal dream which pursued him day and night with demands which he knew he could never satisfy. That under these circumstances he never made, and never even thought of making, any attempt to escape from his childhood environment in order to strike out on a new path, was due to the fact that, without ever reflecting on the subject, he was fully conscious that out in the wide world he would fail and sink, if possible, to even lower depths than at home with his mother.

If nevertheless during the first years of work, and for short periods later, Gunnarsson really tried to combat his sense of insecurity in order to perform his duties on the farm, he did so, as has already been indicated, not from any primary moral instincts or consequent desire to make good, nor even from the mere instinct of self-preservation. He did so solely and exclusively from the fear of disapproval, contempt or enmity, which constituted the only driving

force that ever existed in him, and which in criminals of his type undeniably appears in a form which bears a certain resemblance to genuine ambition. Without doubt there existed in Gunnarsson, as in criminals of his type, the natural foundations for the development of moral forces. This I was able to confirm with absolute certainty both directly in prison and indirectly from his past life. But this foundation, as I have already said, was shattered from the beginning, as was also his purely egotistic instinct of self-preservation, by his lack of self-confidence, and it was therefore never of any significance in determining his actions. But since both in his work and in his intercourse with men he could never display the least sign of personal volition, he was just as much a stranger to his work as to his surroundings, and the work he did could not be other than soulless, dead, mechanical and without relation to that of others. It was therefore useless in itself, and became in the end positively injurious. So long as it was seen that he sought to do his duty to the best of his ability he was treated with a benevolent, though of course somewhat contemptuous, consideration. His mother sent him to a doctor, who—according to a certificate produced at the trial—prescribed iron and arsenic pills for headache, fatigue and general weakness. But as time passed, and his consciousness of his own incapacity became more deeply and firmly rooted, his fear of disapproval could not in the long run hold out against his growing anguished and terrified sense of insecurity. He then began to neglect his work more and more, and to relapse even deeper into the orgies in which he sought momentary relief, and into brooding over the causes of his incapacity, by which he hoped to be delivered for all time. Then of course he was no longer treated with consideration and was soon, as I have said, not only despised but also hated and shunned in the district. This in its turn of course intensified his terror and rendered him still more incapable of all regular, orderly work.

If I have dwelt comparatively long upon Gunnarsson's

fear of the judgment of his fellows and on his inability to concentrate on serious work, it is because these manifestations of his deepest psychological defects revealed the chief determining factors in his outward life, and, as has already been stated, presented them in the clearest, most easily determinable, and most evident manner. His broodings over his incapacity belonged to a deeper stratum of his psychic life, and up to the moment I met him, he had never permitted anybody to glimpse them, either during his past life or in prison, except possibly when in maudlin sentimentality and despair he had allowed them to escape in the company of his bottle companions. He did not understand them thoroughly himself; they moved in the twilight between the conscious and the unconscious psychic life and were rather feelings and premonitions than clear thoughts. From his subconscious mind there were ever flung up into the light of consciousness, like fire from the interior of a volcano, new memories and new facts, which caused confusion and destruction in whatever plans he had succeeded in building up as a foundation for his future life. He was perhaps more ashamed of these broodings than of anything else in his life—even though at the same time he regarded them as the deepest, strongest and best thing in his nature, nay, as the only sacred thing in his existence. In his brooding he regarded himself as seeking the Kingdom of God, and he was convinced in his heart that if only he could find what he sought everything else would come to him. When, during a long period of loneliness, he succeeded in constructing out of his imaginary broodings an explanation of all his previous mistakes and misfortunes, he confidently expected that when he was at liberty everybody would be prepared to take him to their hearts, just as he longed to take the whole world to his heart, and that from then on he would perform miracles of work, introduce new, rational methods of farm management, increase productivity immeasurably, and become a model to the whole district, etc. If it should

occur in prison, then he would find in every servant, warder or fellow-prisoner a good, all-understanding friend, since he himself would then love and understand everything. Finally, he expected, without making it clear to himself, i.e., without wishing to reason or criticize the idea, that pardon must really come any day, since his punishment was now meaningless. But of course all this bliss was shattered, both in prison and out, by the first contact with reality, and he was forced amidst the tumbling ruins to begin to build deeper foundations for a new life, that is to say, he was irresistibly dragged down deeper and deeper in his broodings over his own unfitness for the struggle of life. This obviously caused me greater difficulty in obtaining a clear conception of the real substance and origin of his broodings than I had previously encountered. But by way of compensation he revealed by his brooding more completely than in any other way the radical defects in his psychic life, and also the inner relations of things during his development from earliest childhood until the moment of his crime.

It cannot be denied that this brooding was at first sight of a kind to excite sympathy, not only because it showed his extreme suffering, but also because it gave the impression of a feeling of moral guilt, or, in other words, that something good and permanent had risen up within him after the crime to battle with the weakness which threatened to destroy his moral sense. But as I obtained a deeper insight into him, both directly in prison and indirectly from his accounts of his former life, it appeared only too clearly that the source and driving power was by no means moral remorse or the pricks of conscience. Here, however, I again touch upon a question which nobody who studies the criminal psychology of condemned criminals can for long escape: the psychology of remorse and conscience. I cannot of course in this place treat the whole of this immensely complex and comprehensive psychological problem. I must restrict myself in this connection to advancing certain points of view which are of especial importance for the

comprehension of the psychic life of criminals and which may possibly prove to be of more general interest.

So far as I know, it has been usual in considering the psychology of remorse, or conscience, to assume that remorse or pricks of conscience occur when a person has committed an act which is afterwards condemned by inner forces stronger than those which impelled to the act, and from this assumption the problem has been posed either of explaining the actual nature of the condemnatory forces in mankind in different stages of civilization by historical or pre-historical investigation, or of determining by purely psychological analysis in what manner these forces obtained the character of a higher law of duty. Whether in the process the driving forces have been characterized only as accidental, superficial, etc., and the condemnatory forces as the more permanent, profound and essential, or, by using ethical-religious terminology, the former have been stamped as originating in the lower, sensual, sinful nature of man and the latter in the higher, rational, sacred will, is of no importance in this connection. What is of importance here is the invariable assumption, as of something obvious, that one (or more) definite act in the past is always the origin of remorse. It is also easily to be understood why such a conception of remorse should have prevailed in popular psychology, and even have gained ground in scientific investigations. For neither the remorseful person nor anybody familiar with his pangs of conscience ever doubts in practice that his remorse has reference to some particular act or acts. But if one is forced to penetrate more deeply into the psychic realities here under discussion one soon finds that the pangs of conscience by no means relate to a special act or acts, but, on the contrary, to *everything* which has happened in the past. In accepting the above conception of remorse it has been overlooked on the one hand that the psychic life of man is always directed to the future, so that the past in reality only exists as a foundation for hopes of the future, and on the other hand that it is an organic

whole, from which the consequences of single actions cannot be torn away without doing violence to reality. Remorse is always, therefore, essentially the fear of new mistakes, errors, sins or crimes, and this fear is not really determined by a particular act but by the whole body, usually, of course, only instinctively conscious, of self-knowledge, which has grown up in the past. To this must be added, however—and it seems to me the most significant thing in the whole psychology of conscience and remorse—that a person's mental outlook on the future, i.e., whether he lives in hope or fear, in vigorous action or in despair, in self-reliance or in self-contempt, depends in the last resort on whether his life is or is not directed to a purpose born of his inmost desires and will under given external conditions. The lives of all strong, healthy-minded persons are in this sense properly ordered or directed, and in their case remorse can never permanently cripple them, however great and genuine may be the suffering it may occasion. When such normal persons have sat in judgment upon themselves and as far as possible endeavoured to make good the injury they have caused, they pursue calmly and surely the purpose which their real nature has set before them. Among the weak and the incompetent of whom we are now speaking, and who have drifted purposeless through life, or who have been thrown by external circumstances into a path which is strange or abhorrent to their deepest desires, every act of which they themselves, or even their neighbours, disapprove becomes a welcome outlet for the self-reproaches which are always latent because of their ill-directed or purposeless lives. They would abandon themselves for months and years and tens of years, almost with joyful self-torture, to these self-reproaches, the cause of which was by no means this or that blameworthy act which they momentarily dug up out of the past and hugged to themselves, but the simple fact that they had never been able to concentrate on any purpose of their own free choice. This dispersion of interest and this purposeless drifting through

life became in the end even more, indirectly, the real cause of their anguished conscience. Even external misfortunes and failures, for which they were in no way responsible, and which in others would at most have caused temporary depression even if they had not been a spur to new efforts, were eagerly seized by them, condemned as they were by their purposelessness to everlasting tortures of conscience, and welcomed as nourishment for their self-contempt.

How completely unrelated to any moral instincts the self-reproaches of these criminals really were was shown, among other things, by their complete lack of feeling and their indifference in regard to the crime they had committed: a criminological fact to which I have referred in other connections, because I have encountered it in many criminals belonging to other psychological groups. This empty, lifeless indifference to the most frightful crimes of course made a most terrible impression on me and for a long time it appeared generally inexplicable, because these criminals as a rule had not lost, either from birth or in their subsequent development, all sense of community with their fellow creatures. The very murderers who for years had voluntarily made sacrifices for their children, their wives, their parents, and even more distant relations, spoke of the murder they had committed in much the same way as others would speak of unavoidable mistakes, or even of natural phenomena over which their own will could exercise no influence. This indifference seemed especially unintelligible in regard to the crimes committed by the criminals now in question, whose self-reproach and anguished broodings scarcely left a single point of their past lives untouched except just their crimes and the immediate, most palpable causes of them. They evidently considered their crime as something so obvious that it was not worth wasting words or thoughts upon it. The explanation of this apparently strange circumstance is to be found, however, in the fact that the coarsest crimes—except for very rare and unimportant exceptions—are always the expression of the essential

and permanent defects of the criminals, or in other words, of that which is strongest and, as a rule, unchanging in their natures. It is obvious that a person cannot sit in judgment on himself for acts of such a kind except after such a complete change of heart and mind as would in reality constitute a regeneration, in which the original individuality had died and a new being come to life. So far as my knowledge goes, the real criminals in life lack the psychological foundations for such a regeneration, and even among persons with a normal moral equipment they are extremely rare. Sometimes, it is true, especially during the first months of solitary confinement, they could be brought psychically to accept or to yield, up to a certain point, to the judgment of the community, for they were completely isolated and without hopes for the future, but in their hearts they could never condemn their crime or the acts in which their most deeply-rooted qualities found their most marked expression. This explanation may possibly appear not only repulsive but also untenable, because it amounts to an almost completely negative conception of the natural possibilities of regeneration in the criminal. But anybody who by study or other work in a prison has learned to know with any degree of intimacy the psychic life of criminals must surely admit its inevitable correspondence with reality. Concerning murderers, it may be mentioned here that every murder is an act which presupposes profounder divergences from the normal human character in modern civilized communities than any other act, and that therefore the possibilities of such a change of character as is the necessary foundation of moral remorse are even more infinitesimally slight after a murder than after any other human act whatever.

In Gunnarsson's case, despite his life-long brooding, no thought had ever grown up within him that his torture might have its origin in twinges of conscience after the murder or in abandonment to the unbounded lasciviousness, unchecked by any moral standards, by which he had come to be a murderer. When he was brought to consider whether



this was not most natural and that consequently he could never have peace of mind until he admitted his guilt to himself and sought to atone for his crime against humanity by accepting his punishment as necessary and just, he declared to me during one of my visits, with a thoroughness which under the circumstances naturally gave a frightful impression of complete moral death, and finally with a sort of intellectual satisfaction, that he had arrived at a full understanding on this point ; that his anguished fear and brooding could *not* be due to stings of conscience because after the murder he had never for a moment felt any sort of pity for Anna. On the contrary, he had always hated her and even now, after more than three years in prison, whenever he thought of her he hated her and cursed her as furiously as at the moment when he murdered her. As he continued to speak of this hate his icy objectivity melted away and he lashed himself into a fury which opened out and laid bare his soul more fully than anything before, and which clearly represented the state of mind in which he had lived during the last year before the murder.

At this point I have passed beyond the account of Gunnarsson's anguished broodings and have arrived at the last, determining factor in his development : his steadily growing hate, which at first was only directed to those who had really played a part in his life, but which gradually came to be directed against any human being who entered his thoughts, i.e., against human beings *qua* human beings, and which finally became focused on his sweetheart, and broke out with annihilating force over every restraining influence which still held him back at the moment when he was assured that she was with child and that he was the father.

This lifelong hatred of Gunnarsson, and other murderers of his type, which was in the end directed against the victim of his crime, opened up a deeper abyss of moral desolation than I have ever encountered before or since in my studies of criminals, and it would have been unbearable

for any length of time to observe it as a spectator if I had not, in spite of all, preserved some hope of contributing to his release from it. From what Gunnarsson related, and perhaps still more from what he did not relate, during our conversation on the subject of his past life, I could follow its development almost day by day from childhood to youth, until he sank more and more deeply into isolation and lust, and until the final dissolution in the murder of Anna. In contrast to so much else in Gunnarsson, the origin of the crime was as clear as day from the beginning : it was the hate of the weak, suffering and incompetent for all strong, happy, self-assured persons ; it grew out of fear and envy and in the last resort out of a sense of helplessness and inferiority, a consciousness of unfitness for the struggle of life. It first appeared during the early years at school, i.e., as soon as he was brought into contact with those of his own age, with whom he could, and must, compare himself. Up to this point he had succeeded without much difficulty in keeping aloof from other children, even if he had to resort to childhood's safest weapon against foolish guardians, i.e., tears and the sympathy they beget. Gunnarsson at that time had already repeatedly escaped, by bursting into tears, from accompanying his parents to some party where all the children of his relatives were collected. This instinctive desire to hide themselves, this longing to escape, and even to vanish entirely from the consciousness of others, also makes such children appear quiet, serious, and reflective. Their behaviour constitutes, especially in the eyes of their mothers, yet another ground for the more ambitious hopes and the brighter castles in the air which they cherished. On this account, and on account of the above-mentioned precocity, it had been prophesied of more than one of these murderers during childhood that he would one day become a minister, or a bishop, or even a shining light of the Church, for the blessing of mankind. But once at school it was impossible for them to sneak away from reality. Here they were at once

placed in competition with others and, though in daily and hourly anguish and fear, they had to endeavour to do what was expected of them. The consequence was that in these 10-12 year old children the foundations were laid of the hate which was to grow and develop during their whole lives until they committed a crime, and it still survived in their monstrous hatred of their murdered victims. It was a hatred which was at first not directed towards any particular school companion or companions because they had annoyed them or done any harm, but it was directed in an equal degree against each and all of them, because of a consciousness of boundless inferiority, not only in knowledge, but also, above all, in the capacity for making their way without a moment's hesitation and for holding their own, according to their individual powers, in games, competitions, fights and everything else that filled their leisure hours. This hatred was excited whenever their school companions, either happy and care-free or depressed by reverses and difficulties, yet always simple and self-assured, acquitted themselves well in school hours or examinations or wherever in emergency they were called upon to render assistance on their farms or in any other way appropriate to their station. Of course at this time Gunnarsson neither understood what was going on within him, nor made any attempt to understand it. All his feelings, ideas, impulses, plans and actions still developed, of course, directly, naïvely, and undisturbed by any kind of reflection, out of his own nature and his congenital disposition and attitude towards life. All the more on that account did his hate take deep and permanent root in his soul. It is a well-known and much discussed phenomenon nowadays that no external impressions are so strong and exercise so decisive an influence in the development of a human soul as do the impressions of childhood. This influence is due to the fact that only such impressions can be absorbed quite uncritically and that they are necessarily generalized and regarded as of practically universal applica-

tion. In the same way the conservativeness, or even immutability, of man, after maturity has been reached, may possibly to some extent be due to the fact that the natural tendencies of childhood always develop in an atmosphere quite free from self-criticism, because the foundations of introspection are lacking. At the same time there is often an absence of guidance from parents or guardians, simply because the profoundest and most fateful predispositions to characteristics which cannot be influenced at a later stage only reveal themselves in childhood in the rarest cases with sufficient clearness to be understood by any but experts. If this observation is correct, it constitutes yet another ground for the hope that with increasing knowledge and more widespread information concerning child psychology it may be possible to save children who are cursed with a predisposition to the development of criminal characteristics. As to Gunnarsson, owing to his lack of self-reliance and his fear of others, he of course concealed his growing hate of his companions so carefully that none of them, none of his teachers, and of course still less one of his parents had any idea of it. On the contrary he instinctively and consistently did his best by all sorts of insinuations, and even by doing real services, to obtain their protection, with the consequence that he soon became a toady to the whole school and was generally despised, though nobody took the trouble to affect superiority, either in a fight or any other occasion. If at first it sometimes happened that a school-fellow ordered him to do something degrading, he never attempted any resistance, but doubled his obsequiousness and zeal towards his tormentor. Only on rare occasions and in extraordinary circumstances, when he could be quite certain of not being discovered, would he perhaps permit his hatred to vent itself by doing all the damage he could at the moment, as for example, by stealing or burning the books which some schoolfellow had mislaid or lost. In ordinary circumstances he could only find expression for his desire to surpass

his fellows by fantastical day-dreams of all sorts of cruelty which he would practise on them when, by some vague dispensation of Providence, they had been delivered into his hands. Though I cannot here adduce concrete examples derived from my studies of criminals—for it would involve too great an interruption of my account of the psychology of these murderers—I yet feel that in this connection I should mention that in my opinion many gross crimes, especially those committed by children and adolescents, which are usually regarded as inexplicable because the criminal could not expect any economic gain from them, such as poisoning of babies left in their charge, attempts to derail trains by damaging the rails, and perhaps especially arson, are committed because these young criminals, with their sense of inferiority and consciousness of incapacity, with their hate of mankind and of the whole of existence, are driven to convince at least themselves of their superiority by causing great grief to some special object of their hate, or, if this be impossible, by doing some damage which by its magnitude will excite general amazement and terror. In other words these youthful crimes have not infrequently their origin in the same defects as we have seen to be essential and decisive in the murderers here under discussion. Among these murderers, on the other hand, the fear of their superiors kept their hate in restraint during their school years. Only when this hate, after years of misfortune and surrender to life, had become stronger than anything else within them, did it render them criminals not only in their dreams and imagination, but also in real life.

During his school years Gunnarsson had been able, as I have just said, for short periods or single moments, to lull himself to sleep in dreams of a future when everything would be changed and life would open out to him on the day when he received his school-leaving certificate and he turned his back for ever on the school. But in the depths of his heart he had always looked forward with horror to life among full-grown men, as he knew it would be in

reality, and the nearer the decisive day approached the more his dreams faded away, until they vanished even from his memory. Thus he left school for the wider life beyond with his heart already filled with fear of all the demands which would be made upon him, and hate of all the human beings who would despise him because he could not satisfy their demands. And as his anguish and fear naturally increased with every day of new misfortune, so also his hate grew of all his nearer and remoter neighbours, who, like his school companions and his fellow prisoners, and quite irrespective of whatever sorrows or difficulties they had to fight against or whatever misfortunes assailed them from without, were all, without exception, thanks to their simple, natural self-confidence, so incomparably superior to him that he found himself delivered without hope of rescue to their caprice, and conceived them naïvely as a community from which he alone on earth was excluded. He had always felt himself alone amidst the living unity of all other human beings. During the period immediately following his school years, while Gunnarsson still tried—though on other people's responsibility—to do his duty on the farm, his moods towards his fellow creatures still wavered at odd moments on the boundary between boundless hate and equally boundless self-annihilating gratitude, because in their scornful consideration he seemed to sense understanding sympathy, which was the only thing he ever asked of mankind. But if ever he attempted to approach any of these sympathizers in order in his gratitude to open his heart to them, he was very soon made aware of the fact that he was either completely indifferent to them or even as repulsive as a creeping reptile: in other words, just the treacherous, insinuating failure which he knew himself to be. Then he would sneak away, still more deeply embittered in his secret hate. Broadly speaking, his hate of course definitely destroyed every possibility of real association with his fellows which remained in spite of his sense of insecurity and in spite of his need for support. His hate at this early

age completed his isolation more effectively than did his subsequent solitary confinement in prison. Very soon he was unable to take part in conversation either with those of his own age or with others, still less could he share their amusements and diversions. He could not even listen to what they said at meal times or during work unless he thought that their words referred either openly or by insinuation to him and his worthlessness. Everywhere, of course, he scented hostile intentions and plans, which proved to him that everybody was in a conspiracy against him and that consequently his hate was fully justified as his only defence, his only means of salvation. It happened more and more often during this period that for days and weeks he would drift about like a sleep-walker without the least idea of what was going on around him, because his hate numbed and intoxicated him until finally his whole life was swallowed up by it as if by clouds of impenetrable darkness. Then he would lie awake all night revelling in his hate and picturing to himself all the evil he would do when his turn came. During these sleepless nights his desire to be revenged on mankind for its superiority and good fortune sometimes became so strong that it broke out in a kind of prayer or crying out to God to give him the power to do the evil he contemplated. From men his hatred spread to the whole of existence, to animals, the earth, the forest, the sea, and the sunshine, not only because—as I have remarked above—everything which had some sort of connection with his work filled him with terror, but also because to him everything seemed in some special way to belong to others and to that extent to be a part of them and a weapon in their battle against him.

I need scarcely enlarge on the fact that under these circumstances Gunnarsson became every month more and more incapable of working together with others and that consequently he sank deeper and deeper into a life of loafing and isolation, in which all the distinctive fears arising from his lack of self-reliance—his fear of men, his brooding and

his hatred of life—grew more deeply rooted and expanded as never before, because he more and more gave up the struggle against them until he finally abandoned himself passively to their power.

In connection with the curious dependence of some criminals on their mothers I mentioned that the deepest defects of the former permeated and determined their sexual lives, and before I proceed to a final account of how Gunnarsson's hatred of everything in existence reached its climax and broke out in the murder of his sweetheart it is necessary to examine also this phase of his psychic life, because the abnormal features of his sexual life were undeniably so prominent that their origin and significance in his development must be elucidated. I am the more able to be brief on this point as in the whole of my experience among criminals all conscious and unconscious deviations from the normal sexual development, from the first awakening of sex instincts in childhood until their final disappearance in old age, are, apart from certain forms of homosexuality, only symptoms or effects of deeper-seated psychic defects and are never primary or original causes of the growth of criminal qualities, and the details of these aberrations can never be of fundamental or essential significance in criminal psychology. Moreover, after my description of the ways in which the deepest defects of these criminals dominated almost every phase of their psychic lives, any account of how the same defects suffused and set their stamp upon the sexual instincts must appear unnecessary.

It must be perfectly clear that the sexual instincts of such criminals can never constitute the foundation of, or develop into, real love of even the simplest and most primitive kind, because the sense of their incompetence in the struggle for life renders impossible *ab initio* the growth of any disposition to such love. Indeed, how could the least suspicion of tenderness or the will to protect a woman ever arise in a person so beset by anguished fears, and who



had never approached a fellow creature except to beg for sympathy and help? How could he ever dream of giving himself up to another when the whole of his life was spent in brooding over the reason why he could not live as an independent human being? Or how could he have any idea of the happiness of making a way in life in company with another, when the knowledge of his own incapacity stifled from the beginning every thought of resistance, and life in general had never been anything else but purposeless suffering? If such criminals had been capable of loving a woman, it would simply have meant that there were forces within them sufficiently strong to overcome their fatal weaknesses, or, in other words, that they were not what in reality they now appeared. Indeed, among the thousands of surmises as to the primary cause of his failure in life I did in fact encounter in Gunnarsson the thought that all his misfortunes were due to the fact that he could never "really fall in love" with a girl. It may indeed have happened that among the many motives for his numerous loose connections there existed an unconscious and anguished hope that in this way he might some day meet a woman who could awaken his love, and that through her, or his love for her, he might rise up from his degradation and become like all other real human beings. In order to avoid misunderstanding I should perhaps specially emphasize here that it is *not* my intention to show that these criminals lacked the faculty of permanent love in the higher sense of the word, for in that case they would have differed but little from a large number of average human beings. What I wish to emphasize is that their radical weakness stifled and eradicated every predisposition to be animated even for a moment by any conception of such love. Their sexual connections under these circumstances could obviously be only sensual and of the flesh in the real and exact sense of the words and not in the current sense by which we characterize the everyday debauches of lust and vice, in which in reality there always exists at least some trace of

sympathy, gratitude, goodwill or other higher human feelings. But from this it follows again that in the sexual passion of these criminals there was no higher restraining force ; they were as helplessly abandoned to its power as to that of all their other instincts, and only the degrading, dissolute and destructive instincts could exercise any influence in their sexual life.

Among these destructive forces there was pre-eminently one, arising of course also from the consciousness of their total incapacity, which, from the earliest awakening of their sexual instincts, made itself strongly felt : their sense of powerlessness and inferiority in the presence of all human beings without exception. I have already mentioned that during his childhood and youth Gunnarsson used to revel in dreams of the cruelty which some day in fantastic circumstances he would be able to inflict on his school companions. These dreams sometimes ran to the opposite extreme, in which he imagined himself submitted to treatment a thousand times more degrading than he had ever himself experienced. But whether he imagined himself the subject or the object of all these inhuman actions, the origin of his dreams was equally manifest in his longing for absolute power. He revelled perhaps more profoundly in dreams of degradation than in others because in them the cruelties he had himself devised were directed against himself. All these extraordinary dreams were doubtless from the beginning strongly tinged with sexual lust, although in childhood he of course had no idea of the state of mind which they produced in him. As he developed sexually these dreams attached themselves more and more exclusively, however, to women, and they grew both in intensity and extent in his spiritual life. Moreover, his sleep at nights was soon filled with them. In the end they pursued him in his waking hours to such an extent that his pleasure in every new sexual connection was based on the imaginary belief that his mistress of the moment was completely in his power and that she must

yield, even to the point of death, to his all-conquering whims.

And yet all these irresistible fantasies, springing from his consciousness of incapacity, of divine power and divine right over all created things, could clearly never, however great the pleasure they afforded him, have made a murderer of him, for the simple reason that neither his conscious nor unconscious longing to realize them was strong enough to drive him to action—so much appeared in his pursuit of all his depraved sexual connections. Only when another, and infinitely stronger, force in real life was added, was his fate sealed, and in the very act of murder the sexual instincts, so poisoned by congenital weakness, broke out in full strength.

This additional force was simply his horror of all responsibility, which was at once the most powerful and most direct consequence of his incapacity in the struggle for life.

So long as he could keep his connection with Anna to some extent secret, or could if necessary deny it, she had scarcely played a greater part in his life and dreams of the future than had the previous victims of his lusts. Possibly he had grown to hate her more than the others because their relations had lasted longer than others and for that reason it would be more difficult for him to shake her off, and just as in everything else he fled from his own actions, so he constantly sought to make his sexual connections as brief as possible and preferred to break them off the day they were consummated. But the moment he learned that Anna was with child and that therefore, in or out of wedlock, he would be compelled to take the public responsibility for their conduct and also for the child to be born, a boundless hate for her sprang up within him, which involuntarily focused all his lifelong, impotent hatred of mankind and existence in every form, simply because in that moment she became the person who more than anybody else on earth had the right openly to demand

of him independent, responsible action. If it had been possible for him to hate any living thing more than her, it would have been the child beneath her heart, because it would for the whole of the future have had claims on him, as the human representative, after its mother, of the demands of life. But his hate of the unborn child was naturally swallowed up by his hate of its mother. For the first time in life a human being had ventured to confront him with a real responsibility from which he could escape neither by begging, by lies, nor by secrecy. Therefore he hated her as he had previously hated mankind in general, or the whole of existence and reality as such. But at the same time he could now by murdering Anna once and for all time slake his hatred of mankind and existence and for once convince himself that he was stronger than the whole of reality. Deep down in his heart, in the shadow of complete unconsciousness, he felt or divined that in the person of Anna he was murdering the whole of humanity and really delivering himself for ever from all responsibility. Like so many other murderers, Gunnarsson was for the first and only time in his life completely happy after the murder, because he had at last found an expression in action for the deepest desires of his nature.

### III

#### SHAMMING

AMONG the criminals I now propose to discuss, all individual feelings, and the instincts dependent on them, had been from birth or early childhood too weak to constitute the foundations of individual life. From the resulting psychic emptiness, which I encountered in so many criminals of every psychological category, and from which they endeavoured to escape by so many different methods, they had from an early stage unconsciously sought to escape by attempts to assimilate, as it were from without, not only the conventional and practical rules of life of their environment, but also its moral standards. And since they exerted themselves with all the enthusiasm of cowardice to observe in every detail all that they could comprehend in these rules and laws, they had really succeeded in convincing themselves that they had discharged every duty laid upon them. But since behind or beneath this pretence and delusion there was no other living force left except the bare instinct of self-preservation, and consequently no inward force to restrain it, it had naturally soon become distorted into a radical, mortally dangerous egoism, which was in fact the vital and decisive force in their lives, both directly and indirectly, in so far as they could not apprehend anything that they had not to some extent experienced themselves, and consequently when they believed themselves to observe the rules of life presented by their environment, they were in reality governed by nothing but their own egoism.

One finds in ordinary life everywhere among men tendencies to egoism which, though often perhaps only oppressive to their immediate neighbours, are yet some-

times dangerous or injurious to society. Among such men the original feelings have become more or less completely attenuated and decayed. Their psychic life consequently to that extent only continues to function mechanically, by habit, and in the manner prescribed by society and environment. These tendencies I found therefore developed in practice without any sort of restraint among these criminals.

The most typical representative of this group of criminals that I have met had lived incestuously with three of his daughters and had slain or murdered his wife. He had also in all probability committed arson and perjury, of which latter crimes, however, he could not be convicted owing to lack of evidence.

Concerning the superficial course of his life and crimes I may begin by stating the following facts from the evidence at the trial, which I shall seek to supplement on all necessary points in my account of his psychological development.

Olof Malmström was the son of a country labourer and his wife. He had lived with his parents until he was fourteen years old, had attended the elementary school, was confirmed and put to work as a stable boy with some neighbours in the parish. At the age of seventeen he joined the army, entering the local regiment, and served for a little more than eight years. Meanwhile he had obtained a post, at the age of twenty-three, as a keeper on one of the largest estates of his native province, a post which he occupied for twenty-eight years, and from which he was dismissed, owing to a reorganization of the estate, some months before he was arrested. Whilst still in this position he had married a daughter of his predecessor, Brita Andersson, and had taken over her childhood home, the keeper's cottage at Mossarp, where he and Brita lived during the whole of their married life. By his wife he had three sons and five daughters.

On the 12th May in his fifty-first year he reported to the authorities that his wife had been missing for four

days, whilst he himself was away on business, and that she had left behind a letter stating that she had committed suicide by drowning herself.

It was commonly supposed in the neighbourhood that the relations between Malmström and his wife were very good, so that there was no reason to suspect that he had had anything to do with her disappearance. And yet his narrative of her suicide did not entirely inspire confidence. Brita was known as a quiet, submissive, religious woman, whom one could not possibly imagine to have been capable of taking her own life. Moreover, Malmström's behaviour during the days immediately after her disappearance attracted general attention. He took no serious steps to discover the body and he did not inform his absent children of her death. In his accounts of what had happened during the days before May 12th he was inconsistent and let fall some mysterious suggestions that possibly she had not drowned herself, but had gone to some relations in America. In addition, there were some vague remarks by Malmström's nearest neighbours on a farm of the name of Myngen that he had tried to induce him to set fire to Mossarp during his absence, in order to make it appear that Brita had been burnt with it. In any case the suspicion began to grow in the district that Malmström had done away with his wife, and after the authorities had begun official investigations he was summoned to an examination by the police about a fortnight after he had notified her disappearance.

He then gave an entirely new version of Brita's disappearance. His first words to the examining magistrate when he entered the room were: "My wife is alive, I have received a letter which I will produce, so that settles the matter, and I will pay the costs." He thereupon handed in a letter which Brita, according to a postscript, had caused to be written by an eight-year-old girl, in which she said she was alive and was being well cared for after an attack of dementia and in which she asked her relations not to be

anxious on her account, though she could not tell them where she was. About the same time two other letters arrived in the district with the purpose of confirming the fact that Brita was not dead. In the first, which was addressed to Malmström's neighbour, the writer reported that he had found her unconscious in a boat out at sea, but that she had now recovered from her illness and that he would write again later. In the second letter, which was addressed to the pastor, Brita herself related, through a friend who wrote to her dictation, that she had sought death during an attack of madness, but had been saved by a fisherman, and that in a short time she would journey to her sister in America. She most urgently entreated the pastor to arrange that nobody, and especially her husband, should suffer for what she had done in her illness, and in conclusion she sent affectionate greetings to her husband together with a prayer that he would forgive all the wrong she had done him in life.

Of these three letters it appeared that the first two were written by Malmström himself and the third by his youngest daughter Erna, who had been induced to copy out a draft, which Malmström asserted he had received in the first letter addressed to himself by Brita. This letter had never been through the post ; the second had been posted from the nearest town on one of the days when Malmström had been there, and the third had been posted by Erna's lover during one of his occasional visits to a neighbouring town.

On the 14th of July Brita's body was found buried in a potato patch at Mossarp a few hundred yards from the house, and the same day Malmström was arrested on suspicion of the murder of his wife.

When he was informed that the body had been found he was at first very silent, but after a time suggested that possibly Brita had been murdered by some vagabond. This entirely new hypothesis he rapidly worked up into a very detailed theory that Brita had been murdered by an itinerant Mormon missionary of the name of Knut Janson,



and at the third sitting he handed in a copy of a letter which, according to his narrative, had been smuggled in to him in prison and which contained a full confession by Janson that he had murdered Brita. He attempted to reconcile his new version with the preceding ones by advancing the probability that it had been Janson who wrote the forged letter from Brita in order to cast suspicion on him, Malmström.

Concerning Janson, Malmström related, the first time he mentioned his name in court, that he had made Brita's acquaintance thirty-two years before and that he shortly afterwards went to America, after promising to return and marry her. He further related that he, Janson, had come to Mossarp on May 3rd, in the evening, and had asked for a night's lodging, when Brita noticed that he wore a false beard which covered a large cicatrice on his chin, and that he had with him a bag containing strange implements, probably coiner's tools, and that when Malmström and Brita opened the door of his room in the morning he had approached them with two raised revolvers and threatened to shoot them if they divulged what they had seen, after which he vanished in the forest and had not been seen since. The copy of the letter alleged to have been smuggled into prison was signed by the president of the Black Hand, a secret brotherhood in Hamburg, and contained, in addition to Janson's confession, a statement that it had come to the knowledge of the brotherhood that one of its members had murdered Brita and that he had therefore been arrested and condemned to death and had written down the enclosed confession immediately before execution. In the confession Janson recounted, among other things, that he had paid court to Brita as a young man, but had been repulsed and therefore went to America, and on his return after seventeen years he had often visited her in her home to persuade her to be unfaithful to her husband; he had also on his last visit, to Mossarp tried to force her to accompany him to America and when this failed he had used infamous

force and afterwards killed her by pretending to wipe away her tears with a handkerchief dipped in poison, which Brita had inhaled ; then he had paid 50 kronor to two farm hands on the adjoining Myngen farm to sink the body in the lake.

With regard to these statements of Malmström it was proved that nothing could have been smuggled in to him while under arrest awaiting examination and that no person of the name of Janson had ever been in the service of the Mormon church in Sweden. On the other hand a Mormon missionary of the name of Gustav Jensen had in fact some years previously wandered about the countryside selling religious tracts and had once even visited Mossarp, when he had had a quarrel with Malmström on church subjects, which ended by his being driven out.

Finally, Malmström stated during one of the last sittings that about a fortnight after Brita's death he had accidentally heard from his neighbours at Myngen that three of the family—the mother (who died shortly after) and her two sons—had been at Mossarp on the night between the 7th and 8th of May and that a Jew had on that occasion shown them Brita's body and offered them 100 kronor to sink it in the lake. They had accepted, but did not dare to carry out their plan in the bright moonlight, for which reason they buried the body in the potato patch where it was subsequently found. Malmström asserted that Janson and the Jew were of course the same person and in explanation of his not having mentioned these facts sooner he said that he had not attached any weight to the idle talk of the Myngen people as he was then certain that Brita was alive, since he had received a letter from her. The two sons from Myngen declared that Malmström's story was invented from beginning to end.

In the course of the investigation into Malmström's past life which was instituted after his arrest, it came to light that Malmström had, three years earlier, accompanied his youngest daughter, Erna, who was with child, to a mid-wife in the chief provincial city and that he had there

boarded out a child which had been born to Erna, but which died soon after. It was then suspected that Malmström was the father of his daughter's child. During the examination of Erna it appeared probable that he had also lived incestuously with his two elder daughters, Elsa and Inga, and according to the statements of the three daughters in court he had first sought to persuade them to submit to him because a doctor had advised him for his health to have as much sexual connection with women as possible, and because they ought to learn early how women came to bear children, so that later on, when they were alone in the world, they should not be the innocent victims of men's lusts. When they refused to yield to this persuasion he had forced them by threats and violence to submit to his will. With each of the two elder daughters he had misconducted himself three or four times during the winter when they were preparing for confirmation; his relations with the youngest daughter, which began before she was fifteen years old, had lasted until, at the age of twenty, she gave birth to the child which was subsequently boarded out.

When the statements of his daughters were read from the depositions Malmström immediately confessed himself guilty of all the crimes. But after the sentence of the lower court had been passed, and he was condemned to penal servitude for life for each of the incestuous crimes, he withdrew his confession in a petition to the Court of Appeal and maintained also in the Supreme Court that he was innocent of everything with which he had been charged. In his petition to the Court of Appeal he declared that the prosecutor had himself said in conversation in a private room that he had forced the daughters to their statements concerning the incest by threats of prosecuting them all for having murdered Erna's child, and that the prosecutor had at the same time obtained his own confession of incest by threatening to proceed with the prosecution if he did not confess his guilt. Both his daughters' statements in court and his own confession, which was made only to save his

children, were therefore of no value whatever. The prosecutor repudiated these charges as being entirely false.

Concerning the above-mentioned arson of his own highly-insured house, Malmström had been charged three years before Brita's death. A number of witnesses testified during the murder trial that after the fire he had been generally suspected in the district of having caused it, but that nobody dared to appear against him at the trial. According to these witnesses he had already begun at the time of the fire to suggest mysteriously that it might appear that it was not an accident, and during the time immediately after the fire he had sought to throw suspicion on a number of persons in the district, especially on one of the sons at Myngen farm and on a vagrant well-known in the district. These suspicions proved to be quite groundless.

But more than anything else, in the opinion of the witnesses, Brita's changed mentality after the fire had contributed to keep alive suspicion of Malmström. Brita, indeed, had always been known as of a quiet, submissive nature, but also as a healthy and capable housewife of even good-temper, and immediately after the fire she had begun to suffer from headache, restlessness, brooding, melancholy and insomnia. On moonlight nights, when the light from without seemed to have scared her, she repeatedly left the house and wandered about in the forest until dawn. The fire was evidently always in her thoughts and seemed the only subject which really interested her in her conversation with neighbours and friends. She had never expressed any direct suspicions of Malmström, but all who came into contact with her at this time had a distinct impression that she was tortured by her conscience because of the oath which she had made together with him. During the murder trial the prosecutor expressed the probability that Brita knew that Malmström had caused the fire and that that was one of the strongest motives to the murder. Many witnesses testified that after the fire he was always irritated by her restlessness and indisposition. For the perjury which

Malmström probably committed during the arson trial he was never prosecuted, but was discharged owing to lack of evidence.

For his crime of incest Malmström was sentenced by all the courts to penal servitude for life. The lower court also sentenced him to death for murder. The Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court were not satisfied that he acted of malice aforethought when he killed his wife and sentenced him accordingly to penal servitude for life for manslaughter.

During the time that I was occupied with him Malmström denied the crimes he had committed as fully as he did during the trial. In prison he continued unremittingly to labour, as it were, at the great defence he had put up during the trial by interpolating, whenever it seemed necessary to him, new imaginary incidents, relations and circumstances in order more fully to explain the action of his enemies against him, and he even invented entirely new theories of Brita's disappearance and his daughters' motives for bearing false witness. It was consequently through his lies that I had to penetrate to the central weaknesses in his psychic life.

I made his acquaintance shortly after the life sentence had been passed on him by the Supreme Court. Like so many life prisoners before and since, Malmström began at my first visit to enquire into the legal possibilities of obtaining a new trial. But in contrast to all other intransigent life prisoners, except those psychologically akin to him, Malmström spoke quite calmly, to the point, confidently and energetically, and with what appeared the inexhaustible strength of a good conscience, when he laid before me all the adverse circumstances which had occasioned suspicion and final sentence. Other life-prisoners at the same period used to show indifference or weariness in their denials, which was doubtless the result, during the first period of solitary confinement, of their sense of helplessness in the face of everything brought up against them in a trial which sometimes lasted years, as also in the face of the sentence

which had been passed on them by the supreme and gravest authority of society : a sentence which at that time really seemed to them to embody the condemnation of their evil acts, not only by the State, but by the whole of mankind. It was as a rule only after they had become oblivious of their acts, or still better, completely falsified their recollections of the trial, and had again recovered self-confidence and energy among their fellow prisoners in the common prison, that the old lies told during their examinations and appeals to some extent revived in their consciousness, organized in a more or less well-ordered system. But whether the lies were really advanced as a plea for the revision of their sentence or not, they yet constituted the main pre-occupation of their lives, naturally because, thanks to their capacity for self-deception, they succeeded in maintaining their faith in them as the only possible means of forcing the doors to all that they longed for in the world without. In Malmström's case, on the other hand, there was not the least sign of doubt or hesitation and—still more important—there was not the least shadow of that specially searching anxiety and eagerness secretly to satisfy themselves at every moment as to the impression made by their conduct, which, in spite of all their efforts to conceal it, usually characterizes the most accomplished liars, at least so long as they are able to persuade themselves that they have anything to gain from the person whom they endeavour to deceive. In Malmström's behaviour there was scarcely any appeal for help ; he thought it evident that an honest man like myself would assist, as far as I could, in the rehabilitation of a man innocently condemned. Moreover he mentioned casually that as soon as he was set free he would of course appropriately reward me for my services. He did so, not in a tone of obsequious, tentative bribery, but openly and frankly, like a man who from youth had been accustomed to justify himself to the world. In general he received me in much the same way as he would previously have received his lawyer at his home if he had lost a case

in court: like a substantial and self-assured peasant, who could not be moved by the mistake of a lower court to doubt that sooner or later he would get his rights. And when, during subsequent visits, he realized that I was familiar with every one of his lies from the reports of the trial, and knew by what witness or by what other evidence they had been exposed, it was not the shamed disappointment of the criminal caught in the act or the wild or weary despair of one who had lost a chance and been exposed which met me, but simply the honest indignation and natural wrath of a strong and innocent man when stupidity and cowardice place new obstacles in the path of simple justice.

There was no possibility of doubting that this steadfast, clear conscience was genuine. I saw before me a man who in the depths of his being knew himself innocent before God and man. But at the same time there was of course still less possibility of placing any faith, even for a moment, in the lies which Malmström advanced in his own defence during the trial, which he now repeated in greater detail and with more directly personal variations, and which he developed in prison for my benefit.

It should, however, be mentioned here that during my studies of murderers I have sometimes found among those who protested their innocence something of the same sense of the injustice of their punishment as I found in Malmström's case, although of course in an infinitely less degree and based on quite different psychological foundations. I may therefore be permitted in this connection to say a few words on the psychology of confession and denial in general.

As a rule it is assumed that the confession of a criminal is the result either of more or less genuine remorse or of the realization that continued denial is useless. Of these two assumptions the first is one of those extraordinarily numerous misconceptions in criminal psychology which arise from the postulation of normal or average human impulses and motives in the acts of criminals. Remorse

in the ethical sense is in my experience, as shown in the preceding studies, practically never found among the graver criminals. For a criminal confronted by the alternative of death or penal servitude for life voluntarily (for there is no absolute proof in reality) to accept one of the two punishments simply because he is mentally convinced that the judge has found the evidence against him conclusive, is a psychological impossibility. He would involuntarily hope till the end that something unexpected would happen to forestall his sentence, e.g., the appearance of new (naturally false) witnesses or other evidence in his favour, doubt on the part of the judges in the face of his obstinate denial, the realization that he acted in self-defence or from some noble motive, etc. And with the capacity for self-deception inherent in every criminal he would certainly discover thousands of similar grounds for hoping for ultimate victory in his obstinate struggle against conviction and punishment. During a conversation another murderer condemned to death related to me, shortly after he had been pardoned, that he never for a moment believed the death sentence was seriously meant, but understood all the time "that it was only a demonstration," i.e., that it was agreed between the Government and the Supreme Court that he should not be executed, but that he should be sentenced to death to pacify public opinion, which in his case demanded the utmost rigour of the law.

Murderers confess without exception either because they expect to derive some advantage from doing so, or because in their hearts they recognize the justice of the punishment. In the former case their self-deception revives and mirrors the most fantastic possibilities as a result of their confession. I have particularly noticed in this connection that the suffering involved in the self-mastery which naturally precedes every confession by a murderer often in their own eyes purges them from all guilt, to such an extent that after confession they expect miracles in respect of the lightening of their sentences, and even libera-



tion, as a just reward. After sentence they consider themselves for this reason alone the victims of the blackest treachery on the part of society and its minions, police, prosecutors, counsel, judges and prison chaplains. It is therefore clear that the self-deception of these criminals may be, according to the circumstances, the strongest cause either of their denial or of their protestations of innocence. Concerning their deepest, and of course unconscious, feelings as to the justification of their punishment, there is certainly not, as a rule, the least shadow of a desire to atone for the crime. Rather in their hearts they are unshakably convinced not only of their own right to commit murder, but also, with a disingenuous consistency, of the right of everybody else to vengeance. It never occurs to them that their punishment can be anything else but a sort of collective vengeance, and in the depths of their hearts they know that they themselves, if they had the power, would avenge themselves a thousandfold more severely than does society by means of its penal institutions. I was able to confirm this secret conviction of the justification of punishment in the minds of criminals in a thousand different ways. It showed itself, or was only half concealed, in practically every word they spoke during my conversations with them in prison. It appeared quite frankly in their views of the crimes and punishments of others. There is, indeed, no place on earth where the omissions, mistakes, sins and crimes of others are more severely condemned than in a prison for life-prisoners. I cannot remember a single case in which a life-prisoner betrayed the smallest spark of charitableness in his judgment of the crime of another, whether he was a newcomer, for the moment suffering in solitary confinement, or an older fellow criminal with whom he had lived for years (*not*, be it noted, in friendship, for I have never found in prison the least understanding of the word). These criminals were far removed from the "eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth" of the Mosaic *Lex talionis*: they demanded for the eye or the tooth the total destruction

of the offender, if possible with special tortures added. And this strange primitive conception of crime and punishment as equally justified was, as far as I could discover, the deepest source of the majority of the confessions of murderers. Further investigations into this question may perhaps confirm Lombroso's thesis, and that of the anthropological school, of the psychological affinity of criminals to the lowest and most primitive races. I have mentioned in an earlier work\* that habitual thieves as a rule regard their right to steal as good as the right of society to combat theft by means of punishment and imprisonment with forced labour, and this criminal conception of the justification of their trade as it exists and is treated by society undoubtedly has its deepest roots in a sense of the justice of punishment similar to that of the murderers above described.

But if the majority of the murderers who never confessed their crimes found strength for continued denial either in self-deceptive hopes of all kinds or in their more or less conscious conviction that their punishment was not justified, yet, as has been said, their conviction sprang from quite different psychological sources than in the case of Malmström and those psychically akin to him. I first discovered the denials of the former group among fantastic, restless, vagabond natures, to whom imprisonment was a thousand-fold greater evil than hunger or cold or the various inconveniences while at liberty on the road, and for whom life in prison was therefore an hourly and daily torture of unspeakable intensity, which impelled them not only to repeated breaches of prison discipline, but also to deny their crime to the end. In general it was among prisoners who, for different psychological reasons, were tortured by unending years of penal servitude that I encountered this kind of persistent denial. In other words, these criminals did not deny to themselves the crime they had

\* Studies in Criminal Psychology. I—Contributions to the Psychology of Theft.

committed, but only that the unbearable suffering in prison was a justifiable punishment for their crime. It was consequently their suffering—or the terror which the prospect of suffering inspired in them when they were caught, especially after a previous conviction—which made it impossible for them to admit in their hearts the justification of their punishment and drove them openly to deny their crime.

Malmström on the other hand was, as I have said, immovably convinced that he had never committed the crime for which he was punished.

It may be mentioned in passing, moreover, that suffering was the very last thing to drive Malmström to continued denial of his crime. He evidently thrived, though from psychological reasons as remote as possible, at least as happily in prison as did the criminal Winge who was described in the first study. He had a good appetite, put on weight, and seemed, even in solitary confinement, quite contented with his new work and the whole daily routine of prison life. He never ceased to praise the extraordinary merits of the warders and prison staff. The more I had to do with him, the more my attention was involuntarily drawn to this strange excessive satisfaction with the thousand regulations of prison life and to his extraordinary enthusiasm for those who were appointed to ensure their precise execution. It was quite clear that this well-being and this enthusiasm had no affinity with Winge's self-deceptive metamorphoses of reality. It was also clear that what most filled Malmström with profound happiness in prison was the fact that every hour and every day he was able, by rigorously observing and submitting to rules and regulations, and by helping to prevent others from breaking them, to win the special goodwill of the warders and the prison authorities. Especially when he had better opportunities of attracting the attention of his warders and of showing his good behaviour than he had had in his cell, he repeatedly referred in conversation to the fact that in every respect

his life was now pleasant. He had resolved from the very first day never to be guilty of the least breach of prison discipline, but on the contrary always to strive, in work and play, to do *more* than was required of him, and everything in prison had made it easy for him to keep his resolve ; everybody had shown him friendliness and encouragement ; nobody had ever made him the least reproach. When he had succeeded several times in surprising his fellow prisoners in the act of smuggling tobacco, sweets, pieces of paper, etc., into their cells and had promptly reported them, the warders had begun in a thousand small ways to show confidence in him. One of them had proposed him as cleaner in the governor's office, the highest and most confidential post which a prisoner could aspire to, a real future, as Malmström assured me, and it would not be long before everybody in the prison, from the highest to the lowest, would know that he was to be relied upon as nobody else was, than which he asked nothing better. Had it not been that he was an innocent man he would not have wished to exchange his prison life for liberty. He had told the governor and his assistant so on several occasions. At first all this appeared—when Malmström spoke with deep emotion, often almost in tears, of his own excellence and the beneficent protection of Providence ever since misfortune had overcome him—as nothing more than an extreme form of insinuation of the same kind as, for obvious reasons, one often finds in prison, especially among life-prisoners. But whereas the majority of the life-prisoners I have known showed some trace of independence in their hatred or scorn, pride or resignation, I could not discover in Malmström the faintest shadow of reaction or protest against his punishment. On the contrary he submitted joyfully to it with all his soul, exploiting with pleasure the scant opportunities of obtaining some advantage over his fellows. Possibly this boundless servility in Malmström had its origin in the weakness, cowardice or helpless and submissive craving for the protection of superiors

which is the commonest source of all such ingratiating behaviour either in or out of prison. But it undoubtedly had a much deeper and stronger origin, to which I shall return in my account of his psychological development.

Meanwhile I have postponed all too long the apparently irreconcilable contrast between his crime and his undoubted conviction that he had not committed it. It was in fact only after visits considerably more prolonged than those to other prisoners with whom I was engaged that I found a clue to the psychic defects which were at the same time the cause of this contrast and the decisive force in his life. The more searching my conversation with Malmström became, the more I was struck by the even more paradoxical fact that he did not really deny having *committed* the crimes of which he was convicted, but only that it could be *proved* that he had committed them. It then gradually became quite clear to me that what he really aimed at by all his lies was not that I should permit myself to be personally convinced by them, i.e., place confidence in them in the ordinary sense, but only that, independently of my opinion of them, I should recognize them as logically and in fact possible, and consequently as of equal value with the evidence of the prosecution. In Malmström's opinion his crimes must then become to me, as to every other reasonable person to whom he could present the whole of his evidence, impossible of proof, in which case everything else would follow of itself. He clearly lacked all interest in my private opinion, or in that of others, concerning his crimes or the falsehood of his narrative. In *form* he must of course exert himself to convince me that all these wonderful inventions and deceits only represented what had actually occurred, but in *reality* what he sought to obtain was nothing more than my admission that his versions of the murder, of his relations to his daughters, etc., were as acceptable as those of the court. If it had been possible for him to confess to the crimes without abandoning his opinion that

they could not be proved, he would willingly have done so, since I, for some curious reason, seemed to wish it. To such a degree did he evidently appear indifferent whether he had committed the crime or not. The only thing to which he appeared to attach any importance in his own mind was clearly that it had not been proved, and never could be proved, that he committed any crime against the laws of the State. One receives, it is true, a somewhat similar impression among most murderers who deny their guilt, from their reasons why they could not have committed the crime of which they are convicted. But whereas these latter clearly excused themselves for their lies, because there was no other escape open to them after their crime, Malmström insisted with all his strength, and in all his lies, on his *right* to lie, just in the same way as on his *right* to murder—provided neither could be proved. Indeed, there was no possibility of mistake that Malmström not only considered it his right to deny his crime, but also that in all his lies, and by means of them, he considered himself to fulfil a moral duty, just as every innocent accused or convicted man considers it not only his right but also his duty to maintain his denial, i.e., the truth, in spite of all the trials and sufferings it may often involve.

I have now reached the explanation of his psychic development to which I referred at the beginning of this study. I mentioned then that owing to their individual defective senses no social life could exist among such criminals and that they sought an escape from the resulting psychic void by systematically seeking to adapt themselves, as it were intellectually, to the practical and moral rules of their environment, but that since boundless egoism was the only original living thing in them, they could not perceive any but selfish motives in others.

It must, however, be clear that the image of their environment and of the whole life of mankind and the community which they formed for themselves under these circumstances, must be the most terrible distortion of reality which it is

possible for a human brain to conceive : an image in which there was no room for the least trace of fellowship or good feeling or goodwill among men. Behind every single human action towards a fellow creature they could perceive nothing but selfish motives, and at every moment of their lives they were prepared for some secret attack by their neighbours. The only thing they could properly understand was the practical rules of life of their fellow creatures, in so far as they were based on the promotion of personal advantage.

With more especial reference to the relations of the citizen to the laws of the State, they could of course not be blind to the fact that the great majority really obeyed these laws, but it had never for a moment occurred to them that this obedience was in any way founded on a sense of moral or social duty. They simply could not imagine that obedience to the law was not due to anything but practical considerations. But since it was evident to them from the beginning that mankind only obeyed the law because it was to their advantage to do so, they did not doubt for a moment that all mankind would commit any crime, such as arson or perjury, as soon as there was anything to be gained by it and if they were sure it could not be proved. Consequently they could never regard the indignation of their fellow men at certain gross crimes as other than hypocrisy, either necessary or useful for the preservation of their good name. And since the rules of life, as they conceived them, were their only guide in life, they had gradually worked themselves up to the extraordinary delusion that the acts forbidden by the penal code were only detestable and forbidden when they could be proved, or, in other words, that only those crimes capable of proof were crimes at all. But in Malmström's view conclusive proof could only be afforded by two witnesses or by confession. This view, which has struck deep root in the folk consciousness for centuries, must almost certainly have been current among the peasants in Malmström's birthplace when, fifty years ago, he was quite young and received the impressions which were to

determine the course of his future life. When Malmström, who could only see selfish motives in the actions of his fellow creatures, accepted this belief, it naturally seemed quite obvious to him that nobody who had committed a crime which could not be proved by two witnesses ever confessed to it except either from weakness or because he expected greater advantage from confession than from denial. And since Malmström certainly never had committed an act forbidden by the penal law in the presence of two witnesses, and had never confessed to such an act, he was inflexibly convinced in the depths of his heart that he had never transgressed the law. On the contrary he might, by confession, in fact convert the acts for which he had been sentenced into crimes and thus by his very confession to some extent render himself guilty for the first time in his life of a real crime.

I thus arrived at a comprehension of the fundamental and decisive weaknesses of Malmström's character through my impressions of his outward behaviour in prison when he put forward his tissue of lies in self-defence. Meanwhile I had arrived at the same conclusions from my examination of the substance of his lies.

In the introduction to this work I suggested, among other things, that the old proverb that, with the exception, of course, of persons of greater culture and experience, or superior nature, we judge others by ourselves contains a truth of extraordinary value in all attempts to understand mankind in general, and that its importance in criminal psychology can scarcely be exaggerated, because criminals as a rule not only lack the qualities possessed by the above-mentioned exceptional natures, but also, owing to their other defects, are quite particularly blind in this respect. But among no other criminals whose acquaintance I have made during my studies in prison had this original human tendency to judge others by oneself become so completely dominant in their conception of their fellow creatures as just among the criminals now under discussion. It is



scarcely surprising therefore that this tendency revealed itself also in their lies about others, whether real or fictitious. Just as in reality in their conception of others they attributed to them their own deepest qualities, so also in their lies they invested them with the same qualities so far as these were consistent, even in a most fantastic manner, with the practical object they envisaged in those lies. Unconsciously they made the perpetrators of their lies act in exactly the same way as they themselves would have acted under the circumstances presupposed by the lies. Their fundamental, decisive defects appeared, therefore, just as clearly in their lies about others as they would have done in truthful accounts of their own lives.

But how did Malmström interpret the world which he had peopled with beings invested with his own defects of character? By what forces were these beings governed, beings who, like him, lived free from all the restraints of reality?

After the final sentence Malmström had withdrawn from his advanced line of defence in which the vagabond—Mormon—Jew—murderer of Brita was posted and retired to the position in which Brita was about to proceed to America after her unsuccessful attempt at suicide. Evidently it seemed to him on further consideration more difficult for the prosecution to “prove legally” that she was *not* on the other side of the ocean than to prove that she had not been murdered by a certain missionary, whose whereabouts at various times could clearly be ascertained by the police. So he now declared that Janson’s confession, and indeed the whole of his intervention in the case, had only been a “mystification”—a “betrayal,” as he called it—by his enemies with the purpose of inducing him to give false statements on his trial, to bring suspicion on his defence, and thereby to destroy him. But in doing so he was again confronted with the troublesome fact, which had originally given rise to the whole theory of murder by a vagabond, etc., that her body had been found and identified by witnesses who had known her for years. How did he seek to

escape from the difficulty? Well, once during the closing months of the trial in the lower court it had come to his knowledge that one of the two witnesses who had identified the body had taken on lease, after Malmström's arrest, the plot of ground which he had held in his capacity of keeper. In this fact he found the explanation—clear as day—why he had been accused of the murder of his wife. When Brita disappeared, his nearest neighbour had seized the opportunity to point to Malmström as the murderer in order to get him out of the way for ever and gain possession, not indeed of the land itself, but of the profitable lease. Then afterwards it had been easy for him to secure false witnesses from among his neighbours and even to secure the prosecutor as an accomplice by means of bribes. Whether the conspirators had arranged for the murder and disfigurement of some tramp woman and had buried her body at Furumossa in order to produce conclusive proof against him, or whether luck had favoured them, Malmström would not say, but from certain veiled insinuations it appeared that he regarded the former as probable. During the whole of his narrative of this new theory he indicated, and emphasized point by point, that the murder had been so arranged that whatever the conspirators did was done under such conditions that it could never be proved. In other words, Malmström found it quite natural and obvious that his neighbour, in order to obtain a profitable lease, had accused him of murder, perjured himself, suborned witnesses, bribed the prosecutor and finally committed a murder, and that the people and authorities in the district had been willing to sell their complicity in the plot—though nothing could be proved. It should be carefully noted, as I have already remarked, that in all this Malmström by no means had recourse to all these lies in extreme desperation, without believing in their usefulness for his purpose. On the contrary he received my attempts to explain the absurdity of supposing that anybody would commit such horrible crimes for so small a gain at first

with suspicion, as if he feared to be told nursery tales, and later, as the question of credibility was a matter of complete indifference to him, with indignant rage, since in his opinion his statements were just as possible, and therefore just as good proof, as those which the prosecutor and the witnesses had adduced at the trial.

But what characterized him perhaps still more profoundly was his explanation in prison of the action of his three daughters in falsely accusing him of such terrible crimes against themselves: the husband of Inga, the eldest daughter, had been the father of the child of Erna, the youngest, and in order to remove the guilt from Inga's husband and rehabilitate Erna the two elder daughters had resolved, and the youngest had agreed, to accuse their father of criminal intercourse with them all. They had not been content to accuse him of a crime against Erna alone partly because she would naturally appear as more completely innocent if he were represented as sinning against all three, and partly because they feared that if she was arrested she would fall to the temptation to betray Inga and her husband by repudiating her false confession. This also Malmström confided to me as something quite natural and obvious, and here also he reacted with suspicion and indignation when I sought to put him to rights. The whole of this story was evidently one which might occur in any family in the country. What could be easier for the daughters than, when the husband of the married one misconducted himself with the others, to assist both the seduced and the seducer by putting the blame on the father, especially when in any case the truth could not be proved. After almost every visit to Malmström in prison I was able to note fresh examples of what he found credible in the probable actions of his children, his friends and his neighbours against him and against each other. In the cases just mentioned Malmström's lies referred only to really existing persons, and he was therefore bound by at least some external circumstances in his lies and at the same time his most

fundamental characteristics could not reveal themselves in the strongest possible light. But as soon as he began to operate with purely fictitious persons in his great drama of defence he felt himself free from all other bonds than the necessity of establishing a hair-fine thread of connection between the old and the new lies. Consequently he forced into the feelings, thoughts and actions of his fictitious *dramatis personæ* all his own unsatisfied longings and all the passions born of his profoundest weaknesses, more violently and less disguised than in any of his other lies.

Even when I read the reports of the trial my attention had been involuntarily drawn to his feverish pre-occupation with entirely unnecessary, stupid and fantastic secret circumstances. During my conversations with him in prison the impression grew and deepened day by day that he was drawn irresistibly into the raging whirlpools of exotic, terrifying fables, in spite of the fact that they completely destroyed the already infinitesimally small possibility of substantiating his lies.

To some extent this was no doubt due to a shifting of motive. Malmström had succeeded for years in keeping going by hourly and daily lies. In the process he had necessarily come to love them not only because they secured for him illegitimate advantages, or helped him to shift the responsibility for his misdeeds, but also for their own sake, in much the same way as a craftsman gradually comes to love his tools and his work for themselves and not merely because they provide him with a living. During all these years a lie had become to Malmström, briefly expressed, not only a means but an end, and consequently his pleasure in lying was the greater the more he could remove it from reality. If he stopped at the comparatively unimaginative inventions of which I have given an account it was only because both in imagination and knowledge he was more poorly equipped than the majority, and therefore had to content himself with whatever he could remember of old newspaper serial stories of emigrants to America, cheap

prints on the Brotherhood of the Black Hand, and so forth. I had observed the faint beginnings of such disinterested enthusiasm for lying *per se* among most life-prisoners who protested their innocence. Indeed, it would be somewhat surprising if after years and decades a man could live with his inmost desires and deepest hopes concentrated on lying without gradually losing himself in an irrational, even from his own point of view, love of lying for its own sake.

But at the same time it was quite clear to me that it was by no means only a general delight in lying for its own sake which in his tissue of imaginary events lured Malmström further and further away from the realms of possibility. As the real substance of his fables revealed itself to me alive and naked during our conversations, there appeared more and more as an essential common element in them an irresistible longing for a mysterious power over all persons and things, a power defying all human and divine laws, and working only in the darkness by secret, evasive means : an underground power, which he attributed to all sorts of fictitious persons and societies.

Malmström's ever-changing defence, even in its first form, suggested that his imagination was completely dominated by such an unconscious desire to become secretly and at every moment an absolute lord of life and death over his neighbours. The whole story of Brita's suicide and the letter she left behind seemed, indeed, as if it had been taken direct from some low class criminal romance, whose hero the author wished to invest with demoniac power to annihilate whosoever aroused his displeasure. Even other murderers than Malmström might certainly, in the excitement preceding the murder, have conceived, and in the confusion of terror afterwards, have endeavoured to substantiate, such desperate and unreal lies in order to turn away suspicion. But none but Malmström and his like could be urged from within or gather strength to maintain such a defence over a period of years. What an all-pervading sway this secret ambition had over his otherwise

by no means inferior intellect was shown by his joyous confidence in these lying stories after he was accused of the murder. Yet Malmström, who was poorly equipped with imagination, and who was in my opinion, and that of many others, gifted with far more than the average natural intelligence, considered himself quite safe after his simple statement to the magistrate concerning the suicide and the letter. He did not even think it necessary consistently to substantiate his lies by pretending sorrow or instituting a search for his wife's body, or informing his absent children of their mother's death. On the contrary he continued his daily life as if nothing had happened, and even when difficulties arose and suspicion forced him to modify his original plan of defence so materially as to say that Brita had been saved and had gone to America—which, to judge by some of his utterances, he had certainly always had in mind as an alternative defence—yet he never lost courage or his assurance that he had done all that could reasonably be expected of him. At the first police examination he appeared in the full confidence that everything had been fully explained by his new lie, and that consequently he had only to offer to pay the costs. The same steadfast inward satisfaction with all his many fictions rendered it impossible for him from beginning to end of the trial clearly to appreciate his position. Until the very last moment he could never understand that these lies, which seemed to him so wonderful because they were a product of his fundamental and essential weaknesses, should not be accepted by all rational beings as a complete legal defence. Even in prison he was evidently kindled with inward rejoicing, and his eyes glowed with proud triumph whenever he reverted to the statement that the moment his wife became an encumbrance to him he had only needed to compose a fictitious letter confessing suicide in order to justify him in murdering her in a manner that could not be legally proved. But, for the reasons already given, Malmström's unconscious desire for secret power could not develop quite freely until

a later date, when he was forced by circumstances to make use of fictitious persons in his system of lies. But from that moment he weltered, as far as his weak imagination would permit, in a frenzied, raging delight in everything which could secure to man secret and irresponsible power over the life, honour and property of others, or could set aside the inviolability of women and children. The simple tramp-murderer, the creation of sheer necessity when Brita's body was discovered—developed after a few weeks into an apostle of the doctrine of unlimited polygamy on the other side of the globe, who after thirty-two years' exile suddenly returned, not only disguised with black hair and beard, but also, under the disguise, disfigured by horrible scars, and always operating, without witnesses, with levelled revolvers and poisons which destroyed without leaving any trace, and—without any motivation whatever—with coiners' implements. He was by no means content with poisoning the beloved of his youth, but first lured her, now a fifty-year-old woman, out into the forest to do obscene violence to her, and then to steal her husband's money and securities, and even the bills of exchange and title deeds which could be of no earthly use to him. As if it were not enough that this hero should be equipped with all the inward and outward insignia of the lowest type of criminal romance, he also appeared as a member of the criminal gang most feared in the popular imagination, a society whose secret omnipotence sufficed to lay hands on recalcitrant victims in small Swedish towns and did away with them in Hamburg by poisonous draughts after they had confessed in the presence of twelve judges of the brotherhood. As a very interesting curiosity in the psychology of lying it may be added in conclusion that in the confession—of course in disguised handwriting—which the agent of the Black Hand, defying the vigilance of the Swedish prison system, smuggled in to him, Malmström could not refrain from making the confessor, who had mystified the relatives of his victims by forged letters, jeer scornfully at their stupidity, i.e., his

own stupidity—in exactly the same way as Malmström had hoped to triumph over the stupidity of the authorities and his neighbours after his notification of Brita's suicide. The letter from the confessed murderer closed with the following words : " Malmström has believed all along that his dear little wife lived after the letters I have written to him and others ; I never thought the donkey was so simple as to believe anything good of me."

It must now be clear that the characteristics of Malmström which most strikingly emerge from these lies—his desire, completely devoid of self-criticism, to wield fantastic, secret and absolute power over everything on earth, and his dreams of using that power to destroy or ruin the lives of his fellow creatures whenever he wished—were the direct outcome of his essential defects. His instinctive efforts to assimilate the rules of life of his environment had, as I have said, resulted in a profound conviction that all human beings committed any crime whatever, if it was of any advantage, and if it could be committed in such a way that it could not be brought home, and, best of all, so secretly that nobody could afterwards have any idea of it. This secrecy had become, in Malmström's eyes, a normal feature of human life, and therefore of his own, since it was thanks to it that everybody, like himself, could commit any crime with a good conscience. His unconscious dreams of exercising this power in order to bring misfortune and death to his fellow creatures, especially when he had anything to gain by it, clearly flowed directly from his egoistic weakness.

After all I have said concerning the revelation of the deepest defects of these criminals, as laid bare in their lies concerning other persons, real or fictitious, it must be expressly emphasized that it is by no means possible to observe those defects in their lies concerning themselves. In these they directed all their energy to representing themselves as differently as possible from what they really were, naturally from the conscious or unconscious fear that



truthful, and at first sight harmless, details concerning themselves might later become extremely dangerous, if not even incriminating, by reason of their being inconsistent with their lies. But just on this account the deepest qualities in their nature appeared in their frequently fantastic exaggerations, i.e., to the extent that they went beyond the practical purpose which they sought to attain by their lies.

Malmström's real motive for his subsequently repudiated—and now "false"—confession of incest with his daughters had certainly been simply to stimulate greater confidence in his evidence at the murder trial. It appeared during our conversation in prison that when he began his incestuous relations with his daughters he had really been under the impression that such relations were not criminal, and when he was charged with them he supposed that possibly the punishment would be a short term of imprisonment or a fine—which it is worth noting in itself as showing how completely lacking in any inborn living feeling his conception of crime really was. Where, as in the case of murder and other grosser crimes, he had no knowledge from outsiders of the provisions of the law, he had no means of judging or even imagining the various degrees of punishment. When I once sought to explain to him that the punishment of crime naturally bears a certain relation to the moral heinousness of the offence, he replied that one must of course be a lawyer to understand such matters. So when the investigations into the murder took a bad turn he certainly confessed to the incest without any hesitation in the high hopes that it would strengthen the credibility of his other evidence. It would show that he was not at all the sort of man to seek to escape punishment for the crimes he had committed. When he learned the terrible truth that each one of his crimes was punishable with imprisonment for life, he immediately repudiated his confession. In prison he told me, in addition to what is reported in the minutes of the trial (i.e., that the prosecu-

tion had forced him by terrible threats to make the confession), that he wished to save his daughters from punishment for false evidence. In spite of the fact that the two youngest had been charged with him for incest, he had of course understood all the time that under no circumstances, not even if he confessed, could they be convicted, and rather than see them sent to prison for perjury, he had gladly taken upon himself the punishment for the crimes of which they accused him. When I was amazed at this new motivation, and asked him, among other things, if he really believed that he accepted martyrdom for them at the very moment when he was informed that they had committed such an unnatural crime against him as such a false accusation implies, he replied with most solemn emotion that there was nothing on earth that he would not do for his children. He had carried them in his arms when they were little, rocked them to sleep and cared for them when they were ill, slaved his whole life for their bringing up, never worked or lived for anything but them and they had been his only pride and joy in life. Would he not gladly therefore place his head on the block to save them from wasting away in the darkness and vileness of a prison, when just for once the poor, ignorant children had gone wrong? But this all-forgiving love and boundless self-sacrifice, which was evidently not the most ready-to-hand and most plausible explanation of the subsequently repudiated confession, quite evidently lured him with irresistible power because it was at the opposite pole of his real nature, the thing most remote from his own self that his imagination could ever conceive.

In this connection Malmström confided to me that he had never had any sexual relations with any woman but his wife. He had never either before or after his marriage felt any sensual impulses. He had not felt any such feelings towards Brita during the time he wooed her. She had never attracted him in that way. He had married her because he must have a woman on the farm when he became a

keeper, and he had fulfilled his matrimonial obligations not from wantonness but because the Bible enjoined it. Owing to his ignorance in such matters he had brought down upon himself general ridicule in the regiment. He had become everybody's butt because he did not know what a loose woman was or wherein sexual relations with women consisted. In the same way he had no idea when he married how children came into the world or how the young of domestic animals were born. He had been pure in his married life, and with God's help he had preserved his purity until now, and he hoped that in the future he might be able to be strong in his resistance to the temptations of the flesh. These incredible lies were Malmström's favourite theme. He constantly returned to them and in them he evidently enjoyed in a special degree the pleasure of lying, though never a suspicion of their absurdity disturbed his profound composure. And he reverted to the theme evidently for the sole reason that there was scarcely anything on earth more remote from the truth, more completely alien to his nature than just this sexual purity and self-domination. In the exaggeration of these lies—for it is clear that they were necessarily not a useful part of his great system of defence—I discerned for the first time the essential and decisive motives in his sexual life. But I shall return to this phase of his psychic development in another connection.

But whilst Malmström expatiated during my visits to him in prison on everything which he thought might prove his innocence of the various crimes, he naturally also related all sorts of true and false episodes and events from different periods of his life, narratives in themselves of no significance. From what he related or suppressed, as also from my above described impressions of him as he developed his fictions, there gradually emerged a clearer and more complete picture of his psychic development from childhood and early youth until the day when he committed his last crime.

In childhood he had evidently appeared to his neighbours principally as a curious mixture of pitiful cowardice and fearless courage. For long periods he had bowed and scraped to his school-fellows—very much in the same way as did the criminals described in the preceding study—and had submitted to every kind of tyranny and even ill-treatment from them, until in the end he gradually, of course instinctively, acquired an insight into at least some of the rules governing the amusements, games, work, etc., which made up their life at this period. Afterwards he had become more sure of himself and more brutal and inconsiderate in the application of those rules than any of his companions. At school he seems sometimes to have fought the whole class for the sake of his opinions, and in this way to have inspired a sort of respect, or at any rate, fear, among them. It had been the same, to all appearance, at home. In the hands of his parents he had been like wax until by degrees he succeeded in learning what other children permitted themselves towards their parents and in their homes. He then showed himself in this respect a most obstinate child, not amenable to correction and punishment. Doubtless his parents, his teachers, and his companions had instinctively noted or experienced in him a curious coldness or indifference to all around him and to everything which occupied the minds of other children and youths. For days, weeks and months at a stretch—without of course knowing what he was doing—during which he was occupied with his search for the motives of others and their rules of life, he could go silent at home and among his school companions, whilst doing quite satisfactorily the work which he was put to do.

During the first two youthful years, from sixteen to seventeen, when he was working as a stable boy on neighbouring farms, his life passed in comparative calm. His work had been done under instruction, and without reflection, though by no means without careful search on his part for whatever rules of life he could discover. During

this period he no doubt sometimes appeared a strange creature to his fellow men, at one moment defending to the uttermost with hands and fists against anybody, even his master, everything which he regarded as his right, and at another moment submissive to the point of obsequiousness to the youngest boy or girl on the farm, and yet again entirely unaffected by whatever happened around him. Of course it could not at this time entirely escape the observation of his neighbours that he did his work automatically, like a machine, and this necessarily gave rise to a certain amount of friction between him and others. But in the end they came to the conclusion that he was a dull and obstinate fellow whom there was no reason to dismiss, because in his own way he did his work as well as other boys. In the course of time Malmström's knowledge of the world and of men of course increased, until he was finally convinced in his own mind that he would soon act in all respects like other people.

He was naturally attracted to military life by the deepest forces of his nature, i.e., by his greatest weaknesses. To him it was an ideal life simply because there could never be any doubt as to what he should or should not do. Everything from morning till night was laid down in regulations, and, to add to his sense of security, he was also checked and controlled at every moment of the day by his superiors, and it was a joy—not to say bliss—to appear to them as a most willing and conscientious soldier. There he could pass the livelong day with a perfect sense of security and sleep the whole night with a profoundly easy conscience. And, as the police examination disclosed, Malmström had during the whole of his eight years' service never been subjected to disciplinary punishment except on one occasion when he had been warned because during divine service he had gazed too eagerly at the women's pews, though his behaviour had not been offensive. Only his hours of leave, unless he slept through them, presented any difficulties to Malmström, and then he would sometimes relapse into his

old silence and reserve. But after a time, and of course without any reflection on the subject, he soon learned what his companions did with their leave: games, visits home, girls, drinking, and he soon found it easy to pass his hours and days. Consequently he had practically no unfulfilled desires during his military service, and even in prison these years stood out as the happiest of his life. I have already referred in another connection to his delight in obeying orders and it must now be clear that this emotion flowed from the same source as his content during military service. It may even be asked whether, in spite of all privations, he would not, were it not that he considered himself innocent, have felt happier in prison, with its much stricter control, than he did in the army.

During the time that Malmström was a keeper he could not, of course, enjoy the sweetness of being under discipline and control in the same way as in the army. But instead he had by that time—at the age of twenty-three—undoubtedly assimilated enough of the rules of conduct of others to be able to some extent to make his own way in the simpler and more essential relations of life. Moreover, it had been a part of his duty to see that no poaching occurred on the estate, and this perhaps provided greater pleasure for him than any other work he had ever done. He trembled like a wild animal which has another in its power whenever he captured a poacher, and he felt himself like the victor in a triumphal march when he appeared in court and secured his conviction. In such a case he felt himself not only the executor of the will of others, from the proprietor down to the poorest peasant, but also their active and successful representative.

Of course people instinctively felt the lack of feeling underlying all this and of course he not infrequently quarrelled with his neighbours concerning practical affairs and in ordinary discussions. In the former case he was immovable as a rock, because he felt himself to be the representative of the owner of the estate, just in the same

way as in any other dispute he felt secure so soon as he had ranged himself on the side of the stronger, since he concluded that the will of the latter was right. In that case he would throw out the most unintelligible opinions, and was just as obstinate in defending them as in practical matters. People soon grew tired of listening to arguments, repeated *ad nauseam*, that so and so had said this or that, and therefore it must be right. On the other hand he could sometimes, when he felt quite safe and satisfied with himself, be as cheerful and as high-spirited as anybody else, and would amuse the company with the maddest stories of what everybody, and especially himself, could achieve. He fostered, in fact, by the necessary admixture of comedy, all the unconscious seeds of venturesome or semi-criminal instinct which were present in his audience. But such moments were somewhat rare. He was forced, as the troubles of life grew about him, to brood more and more on what could and what could not be done, i.e., on what were the real standards of conduct of others, and in consequence he soon came to be as lonely in real life as he was in his own heart. So he was left alone, sour or suddenly animated, and his life flowed on year after year without anything of special interest occurring.

But during the whole of this time Malmström had felt inwardly that in the long run he could not make his way by observing the superficial practical rules of conduct of others, and he had unconsciously therefore begun to seek for the deeper and greater principles by which men were able to live. This search for what in reality was nothing more than the moral instincts and standards of his environment had certainly begun during his school years and boyhood. It had continued during his military service, but had only developed apace after he undertook independent work. And since, as I have already said, he could only discover selfish motives in others, it had resulted in the conviction that his acquaintances and everybody else committed whatever disgraceful acts or crimes they pleased,

if only they were sure they could not be proved. This conviction had slowly sunk deeper and deeper into his soul, till finally it was ineradicable. This fateful process had taken so many years to operate because so many external obstacles were placed in its way: the scorn or fury of men against obscene actions which they could not prevent, their indignation at gross crimes committed in their neighbourhood, their satisfaction when the criminal was convicted, irrespective of proof, etc., etc. It was difficult for him to believe that it was all hypocrisy. But sooner or later his belief *had* to conquer because, owing to his inherent weaknesses, it was impossible for Malmström to believe that men did not in the long run do the things which might be to their advantage.

The first crime of which Malmström was convicted at the murder trial—incest with his daughters—he had committed without its ever having occurred to him that it was a crime.

He had of course soon discovered that it was a general practice among the young men in the country before they married to have loose and more or less open relations, lasting for longer or shorter periods, with the girls in the district, and he had been able with a good conscience to do the same himself. He had also, it is true, owing to his natural lack of feeling and consequent lack of living interest both in his work and his amusements, been driven in more upon his sexual instincts than had others of his age, and he had therefore magnified whatever he saw of their looseness, and consequently abandoned himself more than they did. He had doubtless also heard the elder peasants, when their wives were not present, making coarse jests at the lapses of married men, without noting any kind of disapproval in them. He had naturally also exaggerated their vices and consequently could find no reason after his marriage for being faithful to his wife. After all that has been said above of Malmström's inherent weaknesses and their various effects upon his psychic life it need scarcely be



further emphasized that all these sexual relations lacked any shadow of feeling except pure selfish lust. Every woman was in his eyes simply the object of his sexual instincts, beyond that she only interested him in so far as she might possibly be of practical use to him. Malmström had certainly never heard of the crime of incest until he heard of it on his trial, and when his desire for his daughters awakened he had satisfied it without any hesitation and in the full confidence that everybody else did the same in the country homes. It was only because such relations were never spoken about that he assumed they were in some way regarded as evil only if they were openly practised, and that they must therefore be kept secret. He followed the usual custom in order that his conduct in this respect also should be in consonance with that of all other righteous men and in order that he might have a clear conscience in this matter also.

So long as they had been too young to share in the work on the farm he had clearly regarded his children as a curse, an evil like so many others in life, such as vermin, beasts of prey and the like, and during their earliest childhood he had scarcely had any contact with them except when he kicked them when they got in his way or beat them in an attempt to keep them as still as death when he was in the house. As they grew up he looked upon every sign of awakening life in them—their joy in the toys which they had made for themselves out of old bits of wood or old newspapers, etc., their delight in games or the company of other children, and even their eagerness to go to school—as a sort of congenital evil which must be thrashed out of them. He had never known anything of the kind in his own childhood, and as it all seemed to him quite useless, he hated it from the beginning and finally burst out in a fury every time he saw a sign of their unselfish joy in life. Naturally he thought the same thing happened in all other homes. It seems to me probable, though of course I cannot prove it, that one of the results of this bringing

up was the terror which his daughters felt of their father and the whole of existence, as shown by the fact that they were unable to offer sufficiently strong opposition to the incest or to escape from their home after it had been committed.

To a certain extent Malmström's feelings towards his daughters had changed as they grew up and were able to earn their living as maids or day-workers on the estate, or otherwise. On the other hand the fact that at the same time their bodily development rendered them the objects and victims of his sexual instincts exercised no influence on his feelings for them. For there was of course in these incestuous connections if possible even less trace of tenderness, kindness, goodwill, devotion or gratitude than in his other loose relations or in his relations with his wife (of which more after). Between the incestuous acts they simply reverted to their positions as part of the inventory of the farm or as machines which could be hired out.

When he at last gave rein to his lust for his daughters it was simply because, in the first place, he had no motive whatever for restraining himself. There was nothing within him, owing to his complete lack of feeling, to stand in his way, and so far as the opinions of other people were concerned, he was firmly convinced that they were on his side. In addition, Malmström had soon discovered that in every respect that was the most advantageous arrangement. He had now reached the age when it was inconvenient to run around courting the girls. It had happened with increasing frequency that he had failed in his purpose, and it cost a lot of money and time. His daughters on the other hand were always there, so long as they remained at home. He could violate them in a hayrick or go direct from Brita's and his own common bed to theirs, i.e., he could satisfy his desires whenever he wished, day or night. He thus wasted no time and it cost him nothing. When they resisted, he had indeed tried to persuade them with money,

but they had never accepted it, and it had never been long before, by some more than usually coarse threat—to shoot them—he succeeded in reawakening the unbearable terror of him which he had instilled in their childhood and zealously cultivated afterwards. In this way they were soon powerless in his hands.

How, under these circumstances, could he possibly hesitate between his daughters and all sorts of strange doubtful women? It is the less necessary to recount the details of Malmström's psychic life during these inhuman crimes as they only indirectly contribute to the illumination of his psychology as a murderer, and throw no strong light upon it. Malmström's first fully conscious transgression of the law occurred three years before the murder, when he set fire to his own home. As has been said, he could not be convicted in face of his own denial, but the circumstantial evidence against him was very strong and all the psychological indications which I discovered in prison also pointed, in my opinion, to his guilt. I shall therefore here assume it as a fact, though it should be remembered that this crime, like the incest, was only of indirect importance, and in an even less degree, to Malmström's psychology as a murderer.

In any case, however—in contrast to the crime of incest—it had really been committed after a fully conscious inner conflict of motives. In face of a definite transgression of the law there spontaneously rose up in Malmström all his instincts of self-preservation and above all the endeavour, resulting from his original weakness and lack of feeling, and almost amounting to a divine command, to conform to the practical, legal and moral laws of humanity. In other words, his instinctive habit of obedience rose up in all its force in serious opposition to the seductive arguments which lured him by the prospect of gain. It is in the nature of things that the result of this struggle, once it had been brought into the light of consciousness, should be a foregone conclusion. One may indeed take it as a general rule that when a man once seriously begins to consider the possibility

of committing a crime he will sooner or later inevitably commit that crime unless quite extraordinary external circumstances in his life render it impossible. This is so, because, be it well noted, *serious* consideration in fact implies and presupposes that the deepest and unconscious restraining forces are already asleep, and the purely selfish and practical weighing of the gains and risks of a crime can never, owing to the power of self-deception of the criminal, have any other result than that the former appear as a practically illimitable, and the latter as a completely vanishing, quantity. Only an inborn sense of the moral culpability of crime can save a man in the long run from becoming a criminal.

That it was in the field of insurance that Malmström first decided to exploit the law was due in the first place to the simple fact that arson was in the country not only the commonest and best known form of large scale swindling, but also of all crimes the one most difficult to prove. Malmström had of course sometimes heard at home, like everybody else, more or less romantic stories of arson which had saved the perpetrators from economic ruin and laid the foundations of their fortunes, etc., though nobody had dared to attack their reputation, and still less bring any accusation against them. When under pressure of economic difficulties his thoughts began to play about such plans it had been easy for him to hear a sufficient number of such legends to be able to convince himself that the local peasants by no means shrank from setting fire to their farms if only they felt quite sure that their actions could not be proved, and that arson which could not be proved was not arson at all.

Certainly Malmström did not entirely escape evil rumour in the district. But it was due at first exclusively to his own acts of omission and commission *after* the crime. Filled with the usual criminal *hybris* after a coup, he wished to profit by his crime as it were beyond its natural limits, by seeking to disarm a neighbour and enemy by accusing

him of the arson, in much the same way as he subsequently maintained that his neighbours accused him of murder in order to get him out of the way and take over his lease. When the accused person, whom nobody had ever suspected of the arson, was easily able to disprove the charge, he went on to cast suspicion on a wandering tramp woman, whom he thought defenceless. When she in turn was able to prove her innocence suspicion fell upon him. Later on his wife's mental trouble, which was associated with her oath after the fire, gave rise to secret talk. But, as has been said, things never went so far that anybody ventured openly to accuse him until three years later when Malmström was accused, and as good as found guilty, of murder. This complete success in his first crime naturally confirmed Malmström in his belief that only provable transgressions were crimes. The period after the arson might, therefore, have been the happiest in his life if his relations with his wife had not somewhat overclouded it. He was then at the top of his powers, felt free from all fetters, and completely sure of himself. He saw in front of him an unlimited field of activity: perhaps he might even become head of a secret all-powerful society such as, for example, the Black Hand. But on one point, in spite of all his detailed and exhaustive calculation of the profits and risks of arson, Malmström had nevertheless made a miscalculation, and that was with regard to his wife—naturally because it had never occurred to him to take her into account, still less to reckon with what she called her conscience, as a possible element of future practical significance.

When, at the age of twenty-three, Malmström obtained a post as keeper and married, he did so only on practical grounds, i.e., simply because he needed a woman on the farm. To that extent there was in all his amazing lies about his sex purity—as also in his lies concerning other driving forces or instincts in his life—a certain grain of truth, which might be of quite considerable importance for a proper understanding of his psychic life. That his

choice should have fallen upon Brita was due, as appeared both from his true and his false declarations in prison, primarily to the fact that he had made her acquaintance in her home and found her a healthy, strong, industrious and submissive woman, or, in other words, an ideal domestic animal, but also because as the daughter of his predecessor she knew all that was necessary or useful for his office, whereby he could be saved much time which would otherwise have been lost in training another woman to take charge. Certainly he had felt himself drawn sexually to Brita in an impersonal way, as much as to any other young and healthy woman. But he would have regarded it inevitably as the greatest possible sin to allow such impulses to exercise any influence at all on an occasion which was of such extreme importance to the whole of his future. His sexual relations with Brita had of course, from the day he married her until the day he murdered her, remained as untouched by any kind of good feeling as were his previous or contemporaneous relations with loose women or with his daughters.

Until the day of the arson he had learned to value all the good qualities of Brita—her industry, her thrift, her absolute obedience—which had convinced him before their marriage that under his guidance she would be an ideal woman in his home. But, as in the case of his sexual attitude towards her, appreciation of these qualities did not call forth any kind of gratitude or devotion, since such feelings could not possibly arise in him. He had just silently, sourly, and perhaps even with a grumble that she was not even better, left her at her work, and at the least neglect he had broken out in a fury and treated her in the presence of the children and strangers as the most worthless of created things. But since such neglect on her part was extremely rare and since, moreover, she bore his fury, his kicks and curses not only in silence, but with deep Christian humility, she had gradually become a completely impersonal spirit, serving him alone. This result was partly also due to

Malmström having in his self-centred egoism as it were absorbed both Brita and his daughters, until in the end they simply did not exist for him except as a part of himself, or at most as working tools. In this way his married life with Brita passed as in a calm and quiet dream, for which reason people in the district thought, as appeared at the trial, that the relations between Malmström and his wife were happy and good.

Brita certainly had no idea before the arson at Mossarp of Malmström's plans, but only learned afterwards from an accidental remark he let fall at home that he had really set fire to the house. For Malmström had just as little reason before the crime to tell Brita what he was going to do to their joint home as he had afterwards to exercise caution with her as to what he had done. To him his wife had as little existence as an independent being as anybody else. But when Brita came to know that she had committed perjury she was naturally torn night and day between her sense of bounden duty to tell the truth and her terror of all the misfortunes which would befall herself, her husband, her children and their home. Her tortured conscience after her perjury and all her inward struggles soon deranged her mind and made her incapable of carrying on her work. And at this point Malmström was confronted by a fact which aroused at every moment of his life the deepest fury of his soul, and a fact which he was powerless to alter. Not even in his wildest nightmares had it occurred to him that his wife might cherish any feelings, thoughts or desires except those convenient to himself, and he had never for a moment been able to regard her as anything else but a necessary part of the farm inventory. And now, after more than twenty-five years of wedded life, in which she had acquitted herself blamelessly and of course in complete obedience to his will, just like his dogs, his horses, his guns or his plough—now she was suddenly seized with some sort of incurable mental disease, which not only incapacitated her for her ordinary work in the

house, but actually made her dangerous to himself. What Malmström felt when confronted with this state of affairs can only be compared with what he would have felt if one of his cattle had been stricken with the plague or scabies, and he had not had the right to slaughter it or even call in the vet.

At first Malmström really did what he could to cure Brita—not only by threats and force but also by friendly persuasion, and in the end even by holiday trips to relations and friends. Brita was, after all, one of the most valuable accessories of the farm, whom one must make some sort of effort to restore to a useful state, and what Malmström felt for her mental disease was scarcely personal ill-will, for that would have implied that he regarded her as an independent human being. His rage was directed rather against fate and providence which had dashed him down from his high hopes to a nameless misery. And since Brita by no means improved under Malmström's treatment, but on the contrary became worse, and the home decayed month by month and year by year, Malmström was *compelled* to think of getting rid of her. It was not hate, or a desire for revenge which animated him, but rather a sort of desperation. It became clearer every day that he could not allow things to go on in the house as they were; it was even possible that in the end Brita, who now wandered about the countryside in her misery, might go quite out of her mind and confess what she knew of the fire to the pastor, or even to the magistrate.

But on the other hand murder was a serious matter. For in this case Malmström was not blind to the fact that, unlike incest, it was a real breach of the law which he must commit. Neither could he fully persuade himself, as in the case of arson, that he committed this crime with full assurance of secrecy. On the contrary it was hopelessly clear to him from beginning to end that this crime was punishable with imprisonment for life or even with death. He had clearly brooded long on the possibility of



committing this necessary act in such a way that it would be impossible to prove it in law and therefore be permissible. Until the end he was doubtful whether after the murder he should declare that Brita had committed suicide or had gone to America. Only when he had decided in favour of the plan of forged letters and thought out all its details, none of which could be disproved, did he feel himself fully justified, and feel, at the moment when he went forth to murder his wife, the quiet strength which grows only out of a profound peace of conscience.













